

STATE

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September 2012

MAGAZINE

A Fresh Breath

ESTH Monitors Air Quality
for Americans in China

Lean & Green

New OBO Facilities Lauded
for Sustainable Features



Translating Success

ECA Program
Promotes Critical
Language Skills



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Chiang Mai

U.S. has full agenda
in northern Thailand



Wat Rong Khun in Chiang Mai is
also known as the White Temple.
Photo by Mark Stevenson



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On the Cover

Photo illustration by David L. Johnston

Post One

BY ISAAC D. PACHECO

Tongue Tied

Numerous sources, including the Foreign Service Institute, recognize Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin, Japanese and Korean as some of the most challenging languages for non-native speakers to learn to speak and write fluently. Many of these languages contain writing systems, tonality and grammar whose etymological roots are completely different from those of the Germanic-based language in which I'm presently composing this article. This fact, along with a lack of fluent partners with whom to practice in our (largely) linguistically homogenous country, make these languages especially difficult for many American English speakers to master.

While the ability to effectively communicate across language barriers has long been a foundational component of international relations, today's executives and diplomats must also be able to navigate often-complex sets of social mores in real time. Despite living in an age where computer programs can translate text (and even spoken word) into numerous languages almost instantly, there remains a pressing need for human-to-human interpersonal communication with our global counterparts. The aforementioned languages are only five of more than a dozen that the Department of State considers "critical" to its overseas missions.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) has taken this challenge head on by sponsoring the Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program, an interagency initiative launched in 2006 to encourage the development of Americans studying these key languages (pg. 16). The program sends promising students abroad for several months to tackle complex languages in the countries where they are natively spoken. The demanding courses condense more than a year's worth of traditional training into only eight weeks by combining intensive classroom instruction with full-time language immersion with peer tutors and host families.

From all accounts, the CLS Program has been a runaway success, sending more than



3,350 linguistically adept participants into the global marketplace to pursue careers in academia, business and diplomacy. Their work is forwarding ECA's mandate to "foster mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries, promoting friendly and peaceful relations." Many of the features in this issue directly relate to Department employees embracing that mandate.

The ability to effectively communicate in critical languages has led to an enduring friendship with the Bahraini people (pg. 24), an educational partnership with Saudi Arabian students (pg. 22), an emerging dialogue about environmental issues with China (pg. 15), and a valuable trade agreement with the Republic of Korea (pg. 25). Critical language speakers have helped make all of these mutually beneficial outcomes possible, and the need for new speakers continues to grow each day with our increasingly interconnected global economy.

To find out more about how the CLS Program is making a difference, check out the team's website at clscholarship.org. Their participants continue to translate knowledge into success, and make connections that will positively impact U.S. international relations for years to come. ■

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Isaac D. Pacheco".

Corrections

July/August 2012, pg. 36 – The map in our "Appointments" section displayed incorrect location information for Ambassador David J. Lane, U.S. Representative to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture. The USUN FAO Mission is located in Rome, Italy.



Editor-in-Chief

Isaac D. Pacheco // pacheco2@state.gov

Deputy Editor

Ed Warner // warneres@state.gov

Associate Editor

Bill Palmer // palmerwr2@state.gov

Art Director

David L. Johnston // johnstondl@state.gov

Editorial Intern

Natalie LaBayen // labayenn@state.gov

Contacting Us

301 4th Street SW, Room 348
Washington DC 20547
statemagazine@state.gov
Phone: (202) 203-7115
Fax: (202) 203-7142

Change of Address

Send changes of addresses to our staff using the contact information above. Please include your previous mailing address.

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52ND Annual Art & Book Fair

The 52nd annual Art & BookFair of the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide (AAFSW) will take place Oct.

12-21 in the Main State Exhibit Hall and feature thousands of used books, paintings, art objects, textiles, stamps, coins, postcards, CDs, DVDs, maps, ephemera and more. A Collector's Corner will offer rare and unusual books, reflecting the fair's international flavor.

On Oct. 12 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and

Oct. 15-19, the event, now more than 50 years old, will be open to Department badge holders, spouses and escorted guests.

On Oct. 13-14 and 20-21 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the sale is open to the public, with access through the C Street entrance.

The fair accepts Visa, Discover and Mastercard credit cards and personal checks. The sale's proceeds benefit the AAFSW Scholarship Fund and initiatives that support the Foreign Service community locally and abroad.

MAIN STATE EXHIBIT HALL
OCTOBER 12 - 21, 2012



In the News



Medical Officer Eve Gower plays the role of Lady Liberty, accompanied by husband Mike Gower as Uncle Sam, in front of an Empire State Building mural at the Embassy Baku celebration.
Photo by Heydar Aslanov

Celebrating Independence Day at Post

U.S. diplomatic posts abroad from Nouakchott, Mauritania, to Baku, Azerbaijan, celebrated the Fourth of July with public events that welcomed host nationals.

At the U.S. Embassy in Nouakchott, 300 guests at the ambassador's residence also celebrated the 50th anniversary of U.S. embassy operations in Mauritania. An embassy exhibit highlighting the history of U.S.-Mauritanian relations featured a photo of President John F. Kennedy welcoming Mauritania's first president to the White House, plus historic maps and photos of the nation and its capital.

The exhibit also featured photos of all 17 U.S. ambassadors to Mauritania, artist renderings of the future U.S. Embassy compound (scheduled to be completed in 2016), posters of iconic images and two videos depicting embassy programs.

Members of the Mauritanian government visited the display, and many Mauritanian attendees expressed interest in old photos of their capital when it was just being erected in the desert.

"The United States was the first country to recognize the new republic of Mauritania," said Ambassador Jo Ellen Powell. "Today, the U.S. and Mauritania remain strong allies and friends, working together to achieve our common goals of democracy, prosperity and security."

Meanwhile at the U.S. Embassy in Baku, Azerbaijan, Chargé d'Affaires Adam Sterling hosted a New York-themed Fourth of July reception for more than 600 guests in the embassy garden, which had been transformed into a virtual Manhattan complete with street signs for Broadway, Times Square and Chinatown amid trees swathed in twinkling lights.

"The bedrock of 20 years of U.S. diplomacy in Azerbaijan has been to support [the] strengthening of Azerbaijan's independence because Azerbaijan is our partner, and the United States needs strong partners," Sterling said.

Lady Liberty and Uncle Sam, portrayed by an American couple, greeted guests while New York-themed jazz standards were performed in the garden on a white grand piano. Guests could take a hansom cab ride around the embassy basketball court, which became Central Park for the occasion, or pose before an Empire State Building mural. There were also New York taste treats, such as pizza, cheesecake and Brooklyn egg creams, and music provided by American and local artists. Two former Peace Corps volunteers performed a song they called "Baku State of Mind," to the tune of the Jay-Z and Alicia Keys song "Empire State of Mind."

League of Green Embassies Boosts Energy Efficiency

Partnering with the Department of Commerce and Alliance to Save Energy, the League of Green Embassies has initiated the State Department's largest public-private partnership in the smart energy sector. With support from the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, 12 U.S. ambassadors' residences across Europe recently underwent energy efficiency makeovers. They include residences in Brussels, Helsinki, Madrid, Bern, Bratislava, Warsaw, Lisbon, Sofia, Rome, Berlin, Vienna and at the U.S. Mission to the International Organizations in Vienna. As an example of the savings achieved, the residence in Brussels cut its electricity costs by 31 percent over the 10 months following the renovation.

"We call it the 'New Relationship with Energy in the 21st Century,'" said League Chairman Bruce J. Oreck, ambassador to Finland. He said the effort will help the U.S. government meet its targets for greening its buildings, demonstrate to the world market the capabilities of the energy-efficient American products and technologies, and encourage global sales growth of these products and technologies.

The Department's League of Green Embassies, headquartered at the U.S. Embassy in Helsinki, is a global network of nearly 100 U.S. and foreign diplomatic missions committed to enhanced-performance buildings, smart energy use and higher resource effectiveness. Leading by example, Embassy Helsinki's Innovation Center will offer ways other embassies and businesses can evaluate and reinvent their energy and resource use via innovative technologies and practices. The center is on track to be the first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum-certified embassy



building and the first to use only biodiesel for both its diesel transport fleet and backup power generation systems.

The League promotes members' successes via its website and social media. Members have hosted a climate change workshop in Bogotá, installed solar hot-water heaters in South Africa and increased water-use efficiency in Beijing.

Alliance to Save Energy President Kateri Callahan said the efficiencies achieved at one U.S. embassy in Europe demonstrate to Europeans that "any existing home or building—no matter how old—can be made more energy efficient without sacrificing any of its attractive or historic attributes and ambiance."

Renovations are saving several embassies an average of 20-25 percent in energy costs annually. Oreck said Embassy Rome's energy efficiency technologies are expected to slash energy costs by almost half following a \$60,000 investment, saving \$30,000 a year.

The League estimates that the high-performance technologies used in its programs can cut costs by 45-75 percent for exterior lighting, 75 percent for interior lighting and 20-45 percent for heating. They'll also save thousands of gallons of water and oil, and reduce CO₂ emissions.

In coming months, the League will build on its successes in Europe by also collaborating with member embassies in South America, Africa and South Central Asia.

Top: Ambassador Oreck discusses energy efficiency projects that advance the Department's Climate and Clean Air Coalition initiative, during Secretary of State Clinton's visit to Embassy Helsinki in June. *Photo by Juha Rahkonen*
Bottom: A rendering shows the Helsinki Innovation Center, part of a project that will incorporate the center, the embassy's consular section and ambassador's residence, plus a new building providing much of the embassy's office space. *Illustration by Embassy Helsinki*



News

Posts Participate in LGBT Pride Month

Posts as far apart as Monterrey, Mexico, and Tel Aviv, Israel, participated in June's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Pride Month.

In Tel Aviv, the local chapter of Gays and Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies (GLIFAA) and the U.S. Embassy worked with other diplomatic missions in Tel Aviv to create a contingent of participants for the city's Gay Pride Parade. Employees from the missions of Argentina, Australia, Britain, Canada and other nations participated, as did 25 U.S. Embassy staff members.

GLIFAA Tel Aviv designed and sold 65 T-shirts that showed the gay pride/rainbow flag with the word "PRIDE" overlaid in Hebrew, Arabic and English.

"Many people ordered the T-shirt to support the event even if they couldn't make it," said Juan Arellano, GLIFAA member and parade participant. One T-shirt wearer who did make it was U.S. Ambassador Daniel Shapiro, who told a crowd of thousands that the U.S. government was raising world awareness of LGBT human rights. Then he walked with mission staffers in the parade.

One GLIFAA ally and parade participant said she marched to show her support of a cause that she believes deserves continued public attention.

The embassy posted video of the parade on their official YouTube page (<http://youtu.be/QvDkppviLdU>).

Meanwhile in Monterrey, which has an increasingly visible LGBT community, a group of entry-level officers at the U.S. Consulate General organized a representational event in support of LGBT rights on June 28. Invitations proved so popular with Monterrey's academic, nonprofit and artistic community that the number of guests had to be expanded from 60 to 85.

The three-hour event featured panel discussions and speeches by one of the first Foreign Service officers to come out about his sexual orientation in the 1970s and an openly gay entry-level officer.

There were also videos, a group discussion and a reception where a live deejay performance was synchronized to multiple video projections of prominent LGBT Mexicans and Americans. Guests shared impromptu testimonials about their experiences as gays and lesbians living in Mexico.

Meanwhile at Embassy Mexico City, the public affairs section's "It Gets Better" video, involving local activists and a representative of the embassy's GLIFAA chapter, was viewed 2,220 times in its first week on YouTube.

In China, the U.S. Consulates General Guangzhou and Shenyang partnered with local Chinese NGOs to host a month-long series of events celebrating Pride Month and involving American officers from the consulates, an American Fulbright scholar and Chinese NGO leaders and human rights activists. Experts and scholars led discussions on topics such as LGBT rights, transgender issues, diversity, minority rights and the important role of friends and family in supporting LGBT communities and individuals.

The films "Milk" and "Stonewall Uprising" were shown, as was "Mama Rainbow," a Chinese documentary about parents of LGBT people in China. The events drew several hundred participants from across Chinese society, including students, LGBT activists, professionals and the public. Consulate Guangzhou also partnered with a leading LGBT NGO in Guangzhou to hold a social media training and



Above: Embassy Tel Aviv participants join Ambassador Daniel Shapiro in raising awareness at the parade. *Photo by David Azagury* **Below:** U.S. Ambassador Phillip Murphy, fourth from left, joins other officials at the cutting of the Berlin parade's opening ribbon. *Photo by Heiko Herold*



workshop for 20 LGBT leaders from Guangxi Autonomous Region, promoting human rights in China.

Mission Germany's activities included one in Berlin, where Ambassador Murphy joined Berlin Mayor Wowereit and diplomats and politicians to open this year's LGBT Pride parade. Staff members marched in the parade, marking the embassy's first participation in this event. The ambassador also wrote an opinion piece on LGBT issues that was published in major national German papers.

Other LGBT Pride Week activities in Germany included Consul General Patterson being named patron of Hamburg's Pride Week with Hamburg Mayor Scholz, consulate staff marching in Frankfurt's Pride parade, and Public Affairs Officer Teta Moehs speaking at a Leipzig Pride event.



Secretary of State Clinton
meets grant winner Do
Minh Thuy.
Department photo

Winners of Exchange Alumni Grants Announced

Fifty winners have been selected to receive grants this year from the Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF), an annual online project competition involving alumni of U.S. government-funded exchange programs. Winners were chosen by a panel that included representatives of the relevant regional bureau and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) in a process that allowed voting by program alumni.

ECA uses the program to remain engaged with exchange alumni. "By remaining engaged with our exchange participants, we sustain and multiply the impact of the initial exchange many times over," said ECA Alumni Affairs Division Director Lisa Heilbronn.

AEIF grants are used to carry out public service projects in which alumni apply the skills and knowledge they gained during their exchange. Participants submitted nearly 700 projects to the State Alumni website (<http://alumni.state.gov>) in this year's competition, involving more than 7,000 alumni from 115 countries. The projects support entrepreneurship, women's issues, outreach to underserved communities and youth engagement. One winning group in the Baltics will map heating bills through crowdsourcing, an idea it

picked up during its exchange program in New York City. A project in Pakistan will involve women, youth and minorities in the democratic process, while one in Ghana will provide innovative training for Ghanaian women entrepreneurs.

One of the 2011 grant winners, Do Minh Thuy, is a Vietnamese woman who studied at the Indiana University School of Journalism under ECA's Fulbright Foreign Student Program. After returning to Vietnam, Minh won an AEIF grant that helped her form a network of high-profile media professionals who provide training to increase the professionalism and ethical standards of Vietnamese journalists.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton recently met Minh during a trip to Vietnam. At a celebration of Fulbright's 20th anniversary in the country, the Secretary noted that "...today, [Minh's] team has run workshops with over 2,300 participants in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. So one person, one scholarship, has that kind of ripple effect in just one area of Vietnamese life."

More information on the AEIF and other programs that amplify the impact of exchange programs is at exchanges.state.gov/alumni/aeif.html.



FS Youth Recognized at Awards Ceremony

In July, Director General Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the Family Liaison Office (FLO) and the Foreign Service Youth Foundation (FSYF) hosted the annual Youth Awards Ceremony at Main State to honor FSYF contest winners and children whose parents are serving at unaccompanied posts.

DG Thomas-Greenfield applauded their achievements. “All of you being honored today are already among our finest citizen diplomats and treasured members of our Foreign Service family,” she said.

Each year, the children of Foreign Service employees receive awards for their art, essay writing, video production, community service and scholarly achievements. This year’s FSYF Art Contest theme was “Color My World.” Ten winners in each of three age categories received cash prizes from the State Department Federal Credit Union. Their entries were on display in Main State’s Exhibit Hall during the week leading up to the awards ceremony.

The essay contest challenged Foreign Service youth to answer a question in 1,000 words or less relating to their efforts to facilitate greater cultural appreciation and understanding among young people. There were two topic questions, one for high school students and one for middle school students. Six winners, three in each age category, received cash prizes.

The KidVid Contest, sponsored by FSYF and the Overseas Briefing Center (OBC) of the Foreign Service Institute, asked students ages

10–18 to produce a DVD about life at an overseas post from a young person’s perspective. Winners received cash prizes. The videos become part of the OBC’s permanent audiovisual collection.

Each year, FSYF’s Community Service Contest recognizes FS youth who demonstrate outstanding volunteer efforts on behalf of their communities or peers. This year, two winners received prize money and FSYF also awarded a Merit Scholarship to one senior high school student.

Since 2006, the Department has distributed medals and certificates of recognition to the children of parents serving overseas on unaccompanied assignments. To date, more than 3,000 children have been recognized. Additional information about FLO’s Unaccompanied Tours program is available at <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c14521.htm>, and more information about the FSYF awards program can be found at fsyf.org.

Above: Winners of the 2012 Foreign Service Youth Awards who attended the awards ceremony included, front row from left, Martin Lahm, Sara Cha, Alexander Toyryla, Molly Bailey, Narisara “TenTen” Mayer, Daisy Bailey, MeLin Bucher and Kyle Baluyut. In the second row from left are Gabrielle Young, Claudia Amadeo, FSYF President Linda Garvelink, Director General Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Caroline Ezekwesili, Reia Tong, Jasmine Roecks and Rebecca Blaser.

Photo by F. Adams

Past Provides Answers to Current Nuclear Arms Questions

More than 100 students and young professionals from across the United States met for a day in June at the HST Building to discuss nuclear arms control, nonproliferation and international security challenges.

The Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance and the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation organized the gathering as part of an outreach initiative based on the landmark speech President Barack Obama delivered in Prague in 2009. In that speech, he set forth the U.S. commitment of achieving “the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons.” Although he emphasized that this goal would not be reached quickly, and perhaps not in his lifetime, he said it could be achieved with patience and persistence from the next generation of leaders.

Participants in the “Generation Prague: Learning from the Past—Confronting New Security Challenges” conference grew up largely in the post-Cold War era. Generation

Prague will face potential nuclear threats from state and non-state actors, and engaging them in the efforts to reduce nuclear dangers is a high Administration priority.

Conference speakers included Acting Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security Rose Gottemoeller, Assistant Secretary for International Security and Nonproliferation Thomas Countryman, Assistant Secretary for Political Military Affairs Andrew Shapiro and Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs Mike Hammer.

“[We are] going about it in a very responsible way: deliberate and step-by-step approaches on the arms control front, but also ensuring at the same time that the proliferation threats are tackled,” Gottemoeller said.

A conference theme was making nonproliferation and arms control meaningful to a post-Cold War generation. Zeke Gonzales, a student at Bowling Green State University in Ohio, said, “People truly don’t understand the ramifications of what nuclear proliferation

would mean for them personally.”

Many participants emphasized the possibilities provided by social media and technology for promoting arms control. “We are very serious about looking at new technology developments ...and, particularly with young experts, how we can explore fruits of the information revolution,” Gottemoeller said.

Pulitzer Prize-winning author David E. Hoffman said a key lesson for Generation Prague youth is to “realize that in a confrontation like we had in the Cold War, both sides often mistrust each other, and there are huge misperceptions. I think we have to guard against the idea that we know everything, or that the worst case is always true about our adversaries.”

Posts wishing to help engage Generation Prague on arms control and nonproliferation can email GenerationPrague@state.gov. More information about the conference is at www.state.gov/generationprague.

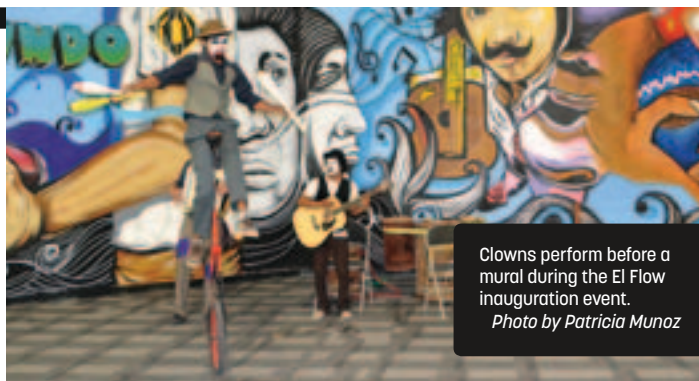
Consulate Uses Art for Youth Outreach

In May, the U.S. Consulate General in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, helped present a student arts exhibit titled “El Flow: Cross-border Youth Culture in Conversation” at a children’s museum there and at the Stanlee and Gerald Rubin Center for the Visual Arts in El Paso, Texas. About 100 people attended the El Paso opening, where they saw art and photographs from the Juárez participants, and 300 attended the Juárez event.

Consulate General Juárez received funding from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs’ Visual Arts Initiative for the bi-national art project, which helped students from four Juárez high schools and four El Paso high schools incorporate their art into the exhibit and keep in touch via Skype, Facebook and email.

Each school competed in art projects with other schools from March to May. Participants posted videos and photographs on the project’s Facebook page and submitted pieces of artwork to two project coordinators who carried them to the other side of the border. They also joined comic book workshops given by a comic book collective and engaged in day-long art workshops where they created personal logos, made stencils and designed t-shirts. The two coordinators worked with local artists to paint murals at the facilities holding the exhibits that reflected the students’ videos, art and personal journeys during the project.

At the opening ceremony in Ciudad Juárez, Consul General Tom Rogan congratulated those involved and cut the ribbon with



Clowns perform before a mural during the El Flow inauguration event.
Photo by Patricia Munoz

the director of the children’s museum. There were performances by local drummers, dancers and acrobats, and a show by aerial acrobats who wore Lucha Libre (wrestling) masks similar to those the participants created.

Pictures of the Juárez and El Paso participants were displayed on one wall, while three television screens showing the students discussing what it means to be a border youth filled another wall. The audience was invited to write comments about the exhibition on a long sheet of paper called a codex. The participants created a codex of their own that was displayed in the exhibition.

Participating students met weekly, beginning in November 2011. In addition to making art, they discussed topics such as community, the environment and what it means to be a young person living along the U.S.-Mexico border. The cultural exchange, especially during the artistic challenges from March to May, broke down stereotypes and barriers stemming from the violence that has affected Ciudad Juárez for the past several years. ■

Diversity Notes

BY JOHN M. ROBINSON
OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS

Diversity: An Essential Tenet for Emerging Leaders

Each year, hundreds of men and women enter the workforce, hoping to become leaders. Some essential elements for good leadership never change—e.g. honesty, communication, vision, situational awareness. But there are also new tools and skills needed to be a successful leader in this era. One of the most essential is the ability to lead a diverse workforce. Ambitious employees are unlikely to lead anything or anybody if they are not leaders of everyone.

The agility of our private sector counterparts has created a proving ground for change and study, including the effect of a diverse workforce. Companies that deliberately and conscientiously employ people from varying backgrounds arrive at creative, workable solutions faster than companies with more homogeneous workforces. Diversity is a modern key to improved productivity and customer outreach. However, if a leader is unable to form highly functioning teams encompassing various perspectives—gender, racial and regional, for example—she or he will not be able to manage larger groups of employees in an increasingly diverse workforce.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of Americans of Hispanic or Latino origin increased from 35,305,818 (12.5 percent of the population) from the last decennial census in 2000 to 50,477,594 (16.3 percent of the population) in 2010. Among racial groups, the Asian population grew the fastest (4.2 percent in 2000 to 5.6 percent in 2010), followed by Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders (0.1 percent in 2000 to 0.2 percent in

2012) and then people who identified as being of two or more races (2.4 percent in 2000 to 2.9 percent in 2010). The White population, not combined with any other race, had the slowest growth rate. America will continue to change as people from increasingly varied racial and cultural backgrounds reach working age, including those entering the federal workforce.

Is there some special key to leading this new workforce? Here is the best-kept public secret: Good diversity management is simply good management. Aspiring leaders should consider perfecting the following skills.

Listen: Many leaders make it to their positions because they speak well; however, with a bit of irony, listening actually becomes more important the higher a leader rises on the supervisory chain. Practicing active listening early is important to keeping a pulse on the mood of the office, building trust and making people more amenable to sharing ideas—keys to generating creative thinking. Also, having the humility and genuine interest to ask people to explain their point of view is a key ingredient to making informed decisions.

Self-Disclosure: While some things should be played close to the chest, leadership's commitment to diversity is not among them. By sharing personal ties to diversity as well as some pieces of personal information such as one's hometown, favorite sport, values and goals, leaders establish their reputation, build trust and foster camaraderie. People want to know about the boss. Ask people about themselves, too. See the paragraph above about listening.



Address Personnel Problems:

Often, the thorniest federal management problems are those dealing with people. When problematic behavior arises, clearly describe the behavior, explain how it affects the work and to what magnitude, and give tools to correct it. Those of us in the EEO field have learned that a conflict may have three or more sides. Explore as many sides as you can discern. Again, take the opportunity to listen and be sure to apply necessary corrective measures. Some employees may need coaching, others training and some merely encouragement. We are all different.

Good diversity management, meaning good management, is a lifelong skill that will become more important with time. Emerging leaders who do not learn the skills to lead a diverse workforce early on will end up hiring workforce diversity specialists to help them later. The Office of Civil Rights stands ready to help now, and the price is right. ■

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John M. Robinson".

Direct from the D.G.

BY LINDA THOMAS-GREENFIELD
DIRECTOR GENERAL

Honoring Our High-Performing Employees

When Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton publicly recognized Department of State employees for their valuable service to America in February, she was stating a view I heartily endorse. During her visit to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that month, the Secretary said USAID and State employees are the “bravest people” she has ever met and that working with them is one of the “greatest honors” she has ever had in public life.

Beyond the Secretary’s recognition, others outside the Department are also lauding our staff for their great work on behalf of our nation. In May, the Partnership for Public Service named 33 finalists for its prestigious Service to America Medals, a national awards program to honor the achievements of federal employees. Three of those named are Department of State employees. Michelle Bernier-Toth, the Managing Director of Overseas Citizens Services, and Richard Boly, the Director of the Office of e-Diplomacy, were nominated for the National Security and International Affairs Medal, which recognizes contributions in national security and international affairs, including intelligence, defense and diplomacy. Diplomatic Courier Shane Morris was nominated for the Call to Service Medal, which recognizes a significant contribution to the nation by a recent entrant to the federal workforce. The winners will be honored at a Washington, D.C., gala on September 13 and will receive \$3,000 to \$10,000, depending on the award.

Bernier-Toth was cited for leading the efforts to prepare the staff at U.S. embassies and consulates to help protect and evacuate Americans caught up in uprisings, wars and natural disasters. Boly was cited for creating innovative social media and online platforms for State Department employees around the world to collaborate, share information and connect with outside offices.

Morris, who has been with the Department since September 2007, was nominated for



overcoming numerous obstacles during the Arab Spring uprisings to ensure that U.S. diplomats in the Middle East could securely dispatch and receive classified documents and equipment.

Although our three finalists were nominated for different reasons, they have all succeeded in showing the world the best of America.

Each of our more than 69,000 employees is vital to advancing America’s interests and national security, enhancing our nation’s relationships around the world and promoting peace, freedom and prosperity. I am proud of their dedication and devotion to their work, and their loyalty to our country.

The nominations of Michelle Bernier-Toth, Richard Boly and Shane Morris put a public face on the important work of the Department of State. Regardless of who wins the medals this fall, we are all winners, because the work of the Department has been highlighted.

You can help our employees get the recognition they deserve for their outstanding service to our nation and encourage the next generation to serve by submitting nominations for the 2013 Service to America Medals by January 4, 2013. To learn more about the application process and obtain online application forms, visit servicetoamericamedals.org. ■

Linda Thomas-Greenfield

Sustainable Foundations

OBO Opens 10 New Facilities in Fiscal 2012

By Christine Foushee, director of External Affairs, Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations


As manager of the U.S. government's overseas diplomatic properties, the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) maintains a portfolio of 76.7 million square feet of functioning property. That total grew in fiscal year 2012, as OBO dedicated 10 new embassy and consulate projects in Kyiv, Ukraine; Tijuana, Mexico; Podgorica, Montenegro; Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam; Dubai, United Arab Emirates; Djibouti, Djibouti; Mumbai, India; Monrovia, Liberia; Bucharest, Romania; and Surabaya, Indonesia. OBO now has \$7 billion worth of projects in design or under construction.

Beyond digging dirt and cutting ribbons, OBO has focused on design excellence with the recent release of the first phase of its "Guide to Design Excellence." In the guide, the bureau lays down a conceptual road map for creating the Department's new generation of secure, high-performing, environmentally sustainable diplomatic and consular facilities. The aim: Provide

the best value for American taxpayers and the U.S. government tenants.

Because of the four to five years it takes to plan, design and construct overseas facilities, buildings dedicated this year were designed prior to the Design Excellence program. Nonetheless, they still incorporate "green" features and innovative design and engineering. The Department now has more than 40 embassies and consulates that have been certified or registered with the U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®). Many of them are the first LEED-registered or -certified buildings in the host country, helping the Department to lead by example in environmental and energy performance.

"Our embassies provide an opportunity to showcase U.S. government leadership in green building practices and technologies around the world," said OBO Director Lydia Muniz.



The new compound in Surabaya has a more comfortable consular area, for visa processing, and a center offering U.S. information.

State Department photos

Facilities that opened in fiscal 2012 include:

New Embassy in Kyiv

Built on a 12-acre site, the new embassy has a new chancery building, a Marine security guard residence, three compound access control points, a warehouse, utility building and parking garage. Completed in September 2011 and registered for LEED certification, the facility was designed to maximize efficiency and minimize energy use. It has a “green roof” of turf and rain gardens in its landscaping that pre-treat storm water before the water is filtrated on site.

Consulate General in Tijuana

This LEED-certified facility has occupancy sensors and electric traction elevators for energy efficiency and is projected to reduce energy costs by 15 percent and use by 31 percent. Dedicated in September 2011, the project received awards from the Associated Builders and Contractors for excellence in construction and the Associated General Contractors of America.

Working with the Bureau of Consular Affairs and consulate staff, OBO designed the consular section to incorporate the latest customer queuing technology and teller window audio/paging communications, plus ergonomic improvements at each teller window workstation.

Consular Annex in Podgorica

The annex provides a new consular facility, offices, compound access controls and a security upgrade of the expanded site. The annex was designed using energy-efficient criteria and materials throughout. The site landscape watering system is a highly efficient and cost-effective state-of-the-art system.



Mini-Compound in Bandar Seri Begawan

The Department's first secure mini-compound, located in a diplomatic enclave, features an irrigation system that utilizes Brunei's abundant natural rainfall. The facility, registered for LEED certification and dedicated in October 2011, received the General Services Administration's 2011 Achievement Award for Real Property Innovation.

New Consulate in Dubai

The new consulate, recently certified LEED Gold, is centrally located on the harbor front and has such sustainable features as solar hot water and zero use of potable water for irrigation. The complex co-locates all facilities and functions onto one compound.

Exterior lighting highlights the new compound in Dubai. **Above:** The new Consulate General in Tijuana is a LEED-certified facility that is projected to reduce its energy costs by 15 percent.



New Embassy in Djibouti

Opened in December 2011, the new embassy has become a platform to increase U.S. interaction with Djiboutian citizens and includes a chancery, a Marine security guard residence, a general services office annex, compound access points and a utility building. It uses water-saving drip irrigation and reuses cleansed waste water for irrigation, helping it qualify for registration for LEED certification.

New Consulate in Mumbai

This project includes a rainwater harvesting system that takes advantage of the local climate and abundance of rain as well as such other green building concepts as an atrium that provides natural light, the use of local stone on the exterior and high-performance aluminum window framing for sun protection.



The new compound in Monrovia was reconfigured to accommodate culturally significant trees. Below: Local stone was used in construction of the exterior of the new consulate compound in Mumbai.



Because Liberia has recently ended a long civil war, the OBO building team collaborated on a plan that allowed work to proceed and materials to flow while maintaining the required security during construction.

New Embassy in Bucharest

The facility has been registered for LEED certification and is entering the review to become the first LEED-registered government project in Romania. It includes an energy efficient building system and such sustainable features as high-efficiency LED exterior lighting, the use of recycled and regional material for construction and green space planted with drought-tolerant species to reduce water consumption. It also has an ultra-high-efficiency chiller that reclaims waste heat discharged from electrical loads inside the building and converts the heat into hot water to heat the Embassy.

New Consulate in Surabaya

Dedicated in May, the new facilities provide a more comfortable consular area for visa processing and American citizen services, and a center where U.S. information will be

New Embassy in Monrovia

Liberia's first facility to receive LEED certification, the new embassy has LEED Gold designation due to its use of rainwater harvesting, an absorption chiller that reclaims waste heat from the generator exhaust for cooling (a first for a Department facility) and an 180-kilowatt array of photovoltaic panels, which generate emission-free electricity and shade for parked embassy vehicles. The building was reconfigured to preserve culturally significant trees, and tree preservation areas were established to protect nine rainforest species.

available. The new consulate compound incorporates a storm water management system that captures downpours and slowly discharges the water into the streets, to minimize flooding.

Building and maintaining diplomatic properties around the world is both an exciting and challenging job. OBO is proud of its many past accomplishments and looks forward to helping keep the Department in the lead in building a more sustainable future. More information on OBO's Design Excellence and sustainability initiatives are at www.state.gov/ofo. ■

The Air Up There

Embassy Provides Air-Monitoring Data

By Erica Thomas, ESTH counselor, U.S. Embassy Beijing, with contributions from Mission China ESTH officers

China's successful Olympic bid in 2001 brought increased international attention to the severity of air pollution in the country's capital, Beijing. As the Beijing 2008 Summer Games approached, athletes and coaches openly worried about the possible harmful effects that air pollution would have on the health and performance of participants. Some athletes even opted out. Most notably, Ethiopian running legend Haile Gebrselassie, then the marathon world record holder, withdrew from the Olympic marathon competition due to worries about Beijing's air pollution.

International media coverage of the issue caused Embassy Beijing employees and American expatriates to ask how bad the pollution was, whether it was okay to exercise outdoors and what could be done to protect the health of Americans in Beijing.

In response, Embassy Beijing's Environment, Science, Technology and Health (ESTH) section worked with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Information Resource Management (IRM) section to procure, install and manage an embassy air monitor that could provide reliable, real-time ozone and fine particulate matter (PM 2.5) air quality readings for the American community in Beijing.

At the time, the only available data on air pollution was the Chinese government's air pollution index, which did not include ozone or the fine particulate standard PM 2.5 pollutants, which are widely acknowledged to pose serious public health risks, especially for vulnerable groups such as people with heart or lung disease, children and older adults. The embassy air monitor system began collecting and publishing hourly ozone and PM 2.5 concentration levels on the embassy website, along with the corresponding EPA Air Quality Index. (The embassy also publishes air quality readings on Twitter so that subscribers can receive hourly air quality updates.)

Although a city-wide analysis cannot be made from a single monitor's data, the air quality monitor has become a trusted source for air pollution data for the broader American community, including medical professionals and international school administrators who use the data to determine the suitability of outdoor activities for students. As a growing number of Beijing-based Americans began relying on the air quality reports, the embassy collaborated with EPA experts to upgrade the monitoring protocols, testing procedures, quality assurance systems and other technical attributes to ensure consistency with EPA guidelines.

Monitors also have been installed at the U.S. Consulates General in Guangzhou (June 2011), Shanghai (May 2012) and Chengdu (June 2012), and those posts now publish air quality data for Americans in those cities. The U.S. Consulate General in Shenyang plans to join the air monitoring program.

Because the air quality reporting was targeted at Americans, the embassy did not anticipate the extent to which Chinese citizens would also want to use

the data. In late 2011, Chinese citizens began distributing the data through such means as reposting it on Chinese micro-blogs and other social networking sites.

In March 2012, the Chinese government announced it would move from its long-standing PM 10 standard to the more rigorous PM 2.5 standard beginning in 2016. Many Chinese cities are already publishing PM 2.5 concentration levels.

Mission China's ESTH team is now working even more closely with EPA to design and implement a standardized mission-wide air monitor system. Funded by IRM's Office of eDiplomacy through an IT Innovation Fund grant, the final system will be a software platform that links all Mission China air monitors and publishes the readings via a unified system. Longer term, the system could be made available to other U.S. diplomatic missions interested in monitoring real-time air pollution levels. ■

The Beijing air monitoring team gathers atop the embassy.
Embassy photo



Translating Success

Program Helps Students Build Language Skills

By Heidi Manley, special projects officer, and Danielle Quigg, program coordinator,
Office of Academic Exchange Programs

When Gustavo Hernandez traveled to China on the Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program in 2010, he didn't know he would soon have the opportunity to showcase his advanced language abilities in a video that included Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Chinese State Councilor Liu Yandong. In the video, shown at the second annual U.S.-China Consultation on People-to-People Exchange in April 2011, Hernandez used his Mandarin skills to extol the value of language learning and cultural exchange.

Hernandez's story is just one example of the ways in which CLS alumni use their skills in "critical" languages, meaning those America critically needs speakers of, to

bridge cultures and positively affect the nation's international relationships.

This summer, 631 U.S. undergraduate and graduate students participated in intensive language institutes overseas through the CLS Program, sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA).

The CLS Program, launched in 2006 as a key component of the National Security Language Initiative, is a U.S. interagency effort to expand the number of Americans studying and mastering critical foreign languages. Since its inception, more than 3,350 participants have learned new language skills and are pursuing careers in diplomacy, academia, business and elsewhere.

CLS participants study in regions where

the critical languages—Arabic, Azerbaijani, Bangla, Chinese, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Punjabi, Russian, Turkish and Urdu—are the primary languages. During their eight-week, group-based programs, they receive an average of 160 hours of classroom instruction, equivalent to a year at the more standard pace of three hours weekly. CLS participants practice and reinforce class material with peer language tutors and host families, ultimately resulting in more than 600 hours of practice.

A 2011 survey of all CLS alumni showed that 66 percent continued their language study after the program through formal coursework, and a larger percentage practiced informally.



From left, Steven Lin, Dana Fager and Joshua Trinidad write Japanese phrases on the chalkboard at the CLS institute in Kyoto, Japan.
Photo by Ayako Isobe

“The CLS Program is critical to U.S. national security interests and to our economic competitiveness,” said Deputy Assistant Secretary for Academic Programs Meghann Curtis. “The language skills and the cultural insights that CLS students gain during their scholarships abroad enable them to pursue some of the most consequential careers within U.S. national security agencies and elsewhere in an increasingly globalized American economy.”

Beyond the rigorous academic curriculum, the CLS Program fulfills ECA’s mandate to foster mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries, promoting friendly and peaceful relations.

“Speaking a foreign language is a critical skill that provides a deeper understanding of other societies and a greater ability to connect and work together with international counterparts,” said Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs Ann Stock.

In 2012, more than 5,200 students applied for the program. Those selected hailed from all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia, and represented approximately 240 institutions, including public and private colleges and universities, historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, community colleges and federal service academies.

The program’s cultural activities augment classroom instruction and increase cultural competency. In 2011, CLS Tunisia hosted El General, a Tunisian rapper involved in the nation’s youth movement during the revolution. CLS participants rapped with him and discussed (in Arabic) Tunisian events and American youths’ views of the events.

CLS Tunisia also hosted a visit by the first advisor to the president of Tunisia and two other members of the Tunisian interim government. Students impressed the visitors with

their language skills and interest in Tunisian politics, and the president’s advisor said he hopes such “heartfelt cultural exchanges would continue as a hallmark feature of the new Tunisia.”

The CLS Program uses a variety of measures to assess language competence, including the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. All participants take a pre-program diagnostic OPI test and a post-program OPI assessment, which give students a widely recognized measure of their skills.

Test score data from the CLS 2011 summer institutes show the students had a remarkable level of achievement for languages that typically require up to 2,760 hours of formal intensive or immersion language training before native English speakers reach professional-level speaking and reading proficiency. The results are at clscholarship.org/outcomes.

As CLS students improve their language skills, their careers flourish. For example, William Broer, a 2010 alumnus of CLS China, now works in Beijing as a project analyst at Pioneer Hi-Bred International, which produces and sells hybrid corn seed in China. Broer, using his Chinese skills, travels to different parts of the countryside to research market conditions and engage locals and marketing partners who do not speak English.

Many CLS participants aspire to work for the Department of State. During program orientation, participants hear from Foreign Service officers and Civil Service employees about how they use critical language skills. Foreign Affairs Officer Dilpreet Sidhu said the program helped prepare her to serve as India desk officer. In May, a Department recruiting officer provided CLS alumni with information about careers, internships and fellowships via a Web chat.

More information on the CLS Program is at clscholarship.org. ■



Above: CLS Beijing participants Brittany Brock, left, and Josette Souza speak with a local resident in his home in a hutong, a traditional Chinese alley. *Photo by Miles Campos; Right:* CLS Ankara participant Emily Grenz, right, learns how to text in Turkish from her language partner. *Photo by Leslie Root*

“When we can communicate, we can build bridges of understanding between our countries and the people in them.”

Participants and their host families forge close and enduring relationships, too. One CLS alumna from 2008 said she is still in contact with her host family in Ankara, and they “are some of the most caring, considerate and patient people I know. They continue to deepen my knowledge of Turkish culture, and I continue to provide them with explanations of American customs and how what they see on TV isn’t representative of ‘real’ American life.”



Driving Performance

Mission Finds Staff Engagement Pays Off

By Teresa Galler, management specialist, U.S. Embassy Bangkok

“Employee engagement” has been a catchphrase across Mission Thailand since Management Counselor Greg Stanford and his team introduced the concept in 2010. Stanford sought to encourage collaboration, promote innovation and increase productivity by incorporating modern management practices into the mission’s work culture, to make employees’ time at work more meaningful and rewarding.

Stanford said the engagement effort aims to move the mission’s organizational culture from reactive and process-driven to values-based and performance-driven, eliciting high levels of productivity, creativity and commitment.

“As best we can tell,” he said, “we’re the first Foreign Service mission to launch a formal, three-year strategy to transform its work culture by consciously aligning strategy with effort. Many books have been written on employee engagement as a deliberate management technique, and several Fortune 500 companies have used this approach to revamp failing businesses and boost creativity and productivity.”

To shape its employee engagement program, the post’s management team partnered with the Sasin Graduate Institute of Business Administration of Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. Organizational behavior experts from Sasin visited the embassy and interviewed a cross section of direct-hire and Locally Employed Staff to learn how employees view their work, their leadership and the mission’s principles. The post is also partnering with a leading Thai conglomerate that underwent an employee engagement effort several years ago.

In the fall of 2010, embassy staff also participated in Aon Hewitt’s Best Employers in Thailand survey, which provided feedback on the mission’s competitiveness as an employer and measured employee engagement at post. The management team analyzed the survey results and information gleaned from Sasin’s interviews and began formulating a plan to strengthen the emotional and intellectual connections employees have with their work and the organization they serve.

Next, an employee engagement working group made up of American and Thai staff discussed the mission’s human resources practices and brainstormed ways to increase job satisfaction. The mission’s Quality of Life Committee provided a forum for employees to share ideas and propose activities encouraging healthy work-life balance and fostering esprit de corps.

“Employee engagement strengthens the community, as evidenced by our new gym, but also connects individual contributions and Mission Thailand’s strategic goals,” said Management Officer Jonathan Crawford.

An example of how the program works comes from the embassy’s Regional Human Resources Office, which this spring evaluated its operations and then engaged in a unit-wide reorganization. Every human resources staff member contributed to the project, and the changes got under way in July.

Ambassador Kristie Kenney arrived at Mission Thailand in January 2011 as the engagement program was a picking up steam, and the initiative fit with her people-first management style.

Her commitment to staff was apparent immediately. “Ambassador Kenney’s first visit to Facilities Management left a big impression on all of us,” said Supervisory Administrative Assistant Sanyapong



Harvard Business School Professor Emeritus Michael Jensen speaks on management and leadership to embassy personnel and guests.
Photo by Suphakorn Niamthanom



Above: Ambassador Kristie Kenney, left, congratulates Legal Attaché Office employee Khun Paisarn Changjongpradit on his selection as June Employee of the Month. At right is Deputy Chief of Mission Judith Cefkin. *Photo by Tawan Ampawan* **Right:** In April, the post's environmental committee promoted morale and environmentalism with an Earth Day fashion show of costumes made from recycled products. *Photo by Varattaya Narksaeng*

Khantong. “Her appreciation for our contributions made everyone feel important and valued personally and professionally.”

Ambassador Kenney took time to get to know mission staff via informal roundtable discussions, visits to workspaces and listening to their stories about life at Mission Thailand. The Ambassador’s interest “motivates and inspires my team [and] helped me realize employee engagement is a two-way street,” said Supervisory Voucher Examiner Pinyapa Ni Chaianuchittrakul.

Ambassador Kenney had the embassy human resources office create an Employee of the Month award to recognize individuals’ extraordinary efforts. Winners are announced via staff notice, featured in the embassy newsletter and welcomed by the ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission Judith Cefkin into the executive office for a ceremony that “makes my day every time,” Cefkin said.

“It’s hard to describe the professional and emotional gratification that comes from the pride, feelings of value and connection to a larger purpose these ceremonies generate,” she said.

A robust employee engagement program requires more than employee appreciation activities, so the ambassador and DCM met with the management team to discuss organizational development and decided on an approach having defined objectives and milestones, which aims to support managers and staff in aligning effort with strategy.

“While nurturing a positive workplace environment and creating a cohesive work culture are key elements of a successful employee



engagement program, helping employees understand who we are as a mission and how they contribute to our strategic goals is just as important,” Management Counselor Stanford said.

Mission Thailand’s employee engagement program challenges employees to think beyond processes, share ideas for improvement and get needed training in supervisory skills and leadership development. Thus, the Regional Employee Development Center (REDC) in Bangkok has increased its course offerings and tailored training to fit the mission’s management approach. (Posts seeking organizational change assistance and training should contact REDC Director Joyce Marshall.)

Although Team Thailand knows its employee engagement program is a work in progress, Todd Bate-Poxon, management officer at the U.S. Consulate General in Chiang Mai, Thailand, believes that “with a shared vision and faith in our colleagues, the program has brought us closer together in and out of the office.” ■

Ambassadors at Home

Lecturers Take Diplomacy to America's Hometowns

By Daisy Cardiel, country desk officer, Office of Children's Issues

The multifaceted mission of the State Department is a mystery to many Americans. Some mistake the Department for a state-level agency, and others don't know the difference between a Civil Service employee and a Foreign Service officer. Even community leaders can be unaware of the Department's services to U.S. citizens at home and abroad.

In an effort to bridge this knowledge gap, Civil Service and Foreign Service employees often speak to public gatherings on behalf of the Department when in their home communities. So far, roughly 1,300 Department employees on home leave have volunteered to share professional and personal life experiences with local citizens as part of the Hometown Diplomat Program.

Many find the experience enriching. For instance, Richard Rasmussen, a political and economic officer in Nepal, volunteered at his alma mater, the University of Wisconsin, presenting on State Department careers to undergraduate, graduate and law students. He said he offered students examples of Foreign Service employees' work, hoping to raise the profile of Foreign Service officers and "give them credit for all they do, but which largely goes unnoticed domestically."

"The Hometown Diplomat Program gave me the opportunity to give back to my home community and my Foreign Service community," he said.

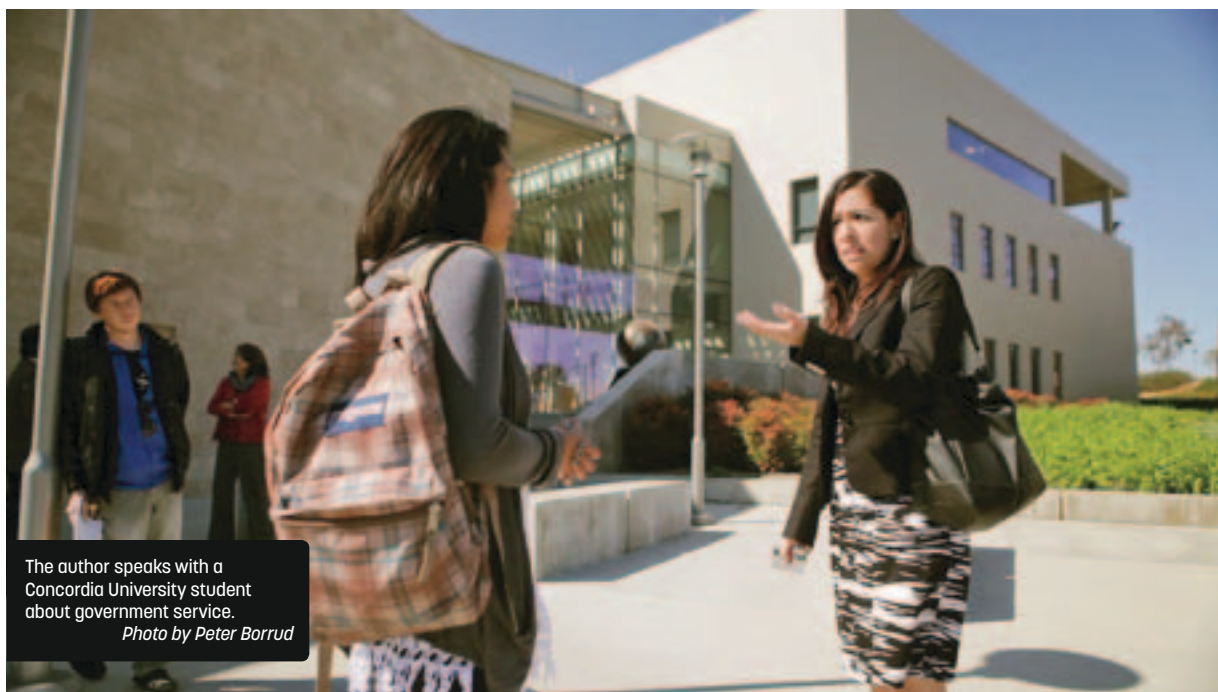
Administered by the Bureau of Public Affairs, the 10-year-old program provides participants with an opportunity to increase America's awareness of international affairs, enlighten audiences on Department operations, communicate American values and share cross-cultural experiences.

Hometown Diplomats promote the importance of diplomacy and highlight career and student opportunities. Organizing their own presentations, they talk about foreign policy and share their Department experiences. In the process, participants have traveled to roughly 26 states to speak to elementary schools, high schools, colleges, universities and community organizations.

Another Hometown Diplomat, FSO Kristin Gilmore, spoke to students at three high schools, including those in a U.S. history class at her alma mater, where her U.S. history teacher had encouraged her to join Model United Nations and set her on the road to a State Department career.

While presenting on the Department in that teacher's class, she said, "I kept thinking, 'someday one, two or more of these students might be in the Foreign Service.'"

Juan Domenech-Clar, political and economic officer in Islamabad, also spoke at a school and said, "Students were curious, and asked sev-



The author speaks with a Concordia University student about government service.

Photo by Peter Borrud

eral questions to differentiate the roles of the president, Department of Defense and Department of State in shaping U.S. foreign policy." The program is also an opportunity to converse with community leaders. "I found it a privilege to be able to talk to students and my hometown mayor about what I do and why I do it, even discussing some of the more difficult aspects of the job," Rasmussen said.

By coordinating speaking engagements with media interviews, the program has even given Department employees a modicum of fame. "An international diplomat is back home to inspire students," reported Garden Grove, Calif., Channel 3 TV regarding Gilmore's presentation. "I love talking about what I do. I have my dream job, which makes it that much easier. So I jumped at the chance to participate in the program," Gilmore said.

Many former Hometown Diplomats say the program is an excellent tool for informing Americans about Department initiatives that might otherwise go unnoticed by the general public.



Above: The author joins students at Concordia University in Irvine, Calif., for a group photo.
Left: The author gathers with West Covina, Calif., High School seniors, who all applied to four-year universities.

Photos by Peter Borrud



When recently on home leave in California, I volunteered as a Hometown Diplomat and spoke to roughly 700 students at my alma maters, West Covina High School and Concordia University in Irvine.

It was wonderful to hear students say “welcome back home.” I felt I was mentoring them as they try to identify a future profession. The majority had little or no knowledge of the mission of the Department, so I defined and explained diplomacy and familiarized them with the Civil Service and Foreign Service career paths. I also explained my work in the Office of Children’s Issues and told them of career and student opportunities at the Department.

Several students said they found the Foreign Service fascinating, especially the benefits of living rent-free overseas. I particularly enjoyed the Q&A sessions, which included a question about how to succeed as I have. I answered, “Reach for your goals, do not be afraid to ask for help and never let anybody tell you that you can’t do it.”

A couple of days later, I traveled back to Washington, D.C., and found an email in my inbox from a Concordia University student who had attended my presentation and spoken with me afterward.

“[When] mentioning my goal to work for the federal government to others, I have received a lot of negative criticism about the school I chose to attend and how it puts me at a disadvantage compared to Ivy Leagues or UC [University of California] campuses,”

the email said. “Just knowing that you are alumni from Concordia and the profession you have just proves to me that they are wrong. I really thank you for that.”

That made me realize how important it is for Department employees to go back home and share their wealth of knowledge and experience. I feel fortunate to have been a Hometown Diplomat because I was able to model the values the Department represents and possibly help develop the next generation of Department employees—and in my home community. ■



Consular Officer David Rochford meets with Dr. Majid Alharbi, director of the King Abdullah Scholarship Program.
Photo by Karen Bauer

Promoting Education

Advising Office Aids U.S.-bound Saudi Students

By David Rochford, consular officer, U.S. Embassy Riyadh

Typical of Karen Bauer's workday was a recent anxious phone call received from a 25-year-old Saudi woman who hopes to earn a master's degree from a U.S. university. Bauer encouraged her to attend a pre-departure orientation at the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh and assured her that she will be permitted to bring her 17-year-old brother as a chaperone; she'll just have to lift her veil and show her face to security guards before entering the embassy.

Answering questions about chaperones and female dress codes is just part of Bauer's daily routine in her six years as an education advisor in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, where she encourages students to study in the United States and prepares them for the cultural differences. Through the King Abdullah Scholarship Program (KASP), around 55,000 Saudis are studying in the United States, their tuition, travel costs and living expenses paid by the Saudi government. Around 11,000 additional students are studying in the United States through other funding sources.

"When I started this job," Bauer said, "I never would have thought it possible to see the huge numbers of Saudi students studying in the U.S. that we have today. It really is an exciting achievement for the United States and Saudi Arabia."

The Education Advising Centers in Saudi Arabia are an integral part of the mission's public affairs section, fulfilling the Department's mandate to engage youth and promote education in the United States. The centers, in Embassy Riyadh and Consulates General Jeddah and Dhahran, are part of the EducationUSA global network of 170 advising centers supported by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

EducationUSA advisors are housed in a variety of host institutions, including Fulbright Commissions, offices of the Institute of International Education, AMIDEAST offices, U.S. embassies and consulates, universities and public libraries. They share the common goal of helping students access opportunities for higher education in the United States.

A team of 28 EducationUSA advisors spread across 19 countries covers the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region. Bauer, senior education advisor for Saudi Arabia, leads a team of three advisors at the embassy and consulates general. Bauer's boss, MENA Regional Educational Advisor Kristen Cammarata, is based in Rabat, Morocco, and works with the MENA advisors to promote U.S. study.

“EducationUSA Saudi Arabia handles more inquiries than any other operation in the MENA region, and the Riyadh center is one of the most professional advising offices in the world,” Cammarata said. She emphasized that the team’s work is important to the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, part of the Saudi Embassy in Washington, D.C., and to U.S. universities and students.

Bauer said it took several months to adapt to working in Saudi Arabia, where a high degree of cross-cultural understanding is required. Restrictions on public outreach, a prohibition on women driving and sensitivities about men and women mixing in public make traditional education advising difficult. Bauer said she spends much time reassuring parents about campus safety and preparing students for the educational expectations of American colleges.

Through the KASP program, tens of thousands of young Saudi women study in the United States every year. In fact, during the past three years women won more than half of the scholarships. Bauer said she feels special pride for these young women, who have overcome cultural challenges, thrived as students in the United States and returned to Saudi Arabia to become pioneers in their fields.

The cultural challenges “are no match for the ambitions of these young Saudis hoping to study in the United States,” she said.

Students in the KASP program can study in any of the 22 countries approved by the Saudi government. The number of students increased from around 3,000 students in 2005, the year President George W. Bush and King Abdullah conceived of the program during a Texas meeting, to around 55,000 today. That surge is attributable to Bauer’s efforts and increased cooperation across Mission Saudi Arabia. Bauer meets regularly with her counterparts in Dhahran and Jeddah to coordinate messages, troubleshoot and strategize.

The embassy public affairs section (PAS) supports EducationUSA by participating in the International Exhibition and Conference on Higher Education, one of the few government-supported mixed-gender education events in Saudi Arabia. In 2012, almost 275,000 Saudis visited the exhibition, which included representatives from 69 American colleges and universities. Officers from every embassy section volunteered at the PAS

booth, answering questions about the United States and their college experiences.

This embassy-wide support for EducationUSA reflects the priority the mission places on promoting U.S. education. According to Riyadh Public Affairs Officer Bridget Gersten, “Education advising is one of the cornerstones of our public diplomacy mission. The key to our success and message has been teamwork with embassy colleagues and the support of Ambassador Jim Smith.”

Bauer said the consular section has also been an invaluable partner. Over the past several years, the section has worked to dispel misperceptions among the Saudi public about the challenges of obtaining a visa, by making information on the visa process more readily available. The section ensured that visa information was available on the embassy website in Arabic and began hosting question-and-answer sessions on Facebook and Twitter.

The section also hosted a widely publicized press open house, where journalists were afforded a behind-the-scenes look at the visa interview process. Bauer and consular officers also met with Saudi Ministry of Education

officials to develop opportunities for collaboration and a process for scheduling interviews for student visas.

While Saudi Arabian students get access to the one of the world’s leading higher education systems, the United States benefits, too, by hosting around 66,000 Saudi students, many of whom bring spouses and children.

Saudi students enrich U.S. classrooms, offering new perspectives and helping American students better understand Saudi culture. Bauer said students returning from U.S. study often express surprise at the friendliness and openness of the American people.

“The relationships the students build with Americans are the most important legacy of this exchange,” she said. ■



Top: Students complete surveys on iPads at the EducationUSA booth at the International Exhibition and Conference on Higher Education in Riyadh. **Photo by Karen Bauer** **Bottom:** Consul General Tom Duffy presents his post’s 5,000th visa of 2012 to KASP student Nora Abusaud, at the U.S. Consulate General in Jeddah. She will study in California. **Photo by Loyal Zok**

Celebrating a Lasting Friendship

Festival commemorates U.S. partnership with Bahrain

By Shana L. Kieran, deputy public affairs officer, U.S. Embassy Manama

Often described as “a good friend in a tough neighborhood,” the tiny island kingdom of Bahrain is a longstanding U.S. ally and strategic partner. These ties were tested in the aftermath of the February 2011 popular uprising, when Bahrainis first took to the streets calling for political reform, and many questioned the U.S. relationship.

Amid this challenging backdrop, the U.S. Embassy in Manama sought to highlight the relationship’s history and depth by hosting its first “America Week Bahrain” in May. The week-long festival featured activities showcasing American culture, business, education, tourism and sports, and the people-to-people ties that have bound the two nations together for 109 years.



Beneath a giant red, white and blue arch made of balloons, more than 300 people attended the festival kick-off at one of Bahrain’s largest shopping malls. Ambassador Thomas Krajewski, Bahraini Minister of Industry and Commerce Dr. Hassan Fakhro and other dignitaries opened the event as students from the local Bahrain School sang American standards. Guests enjoyed free samples from Starbucks, Coca-Cola and other American brands.

The mall’s atrium was lined with an American art and photography exhibit presented by the American Women’s Association of Bahrain. Outside, young American professional skateboarders whizzed around the parking lot, showcasing their talents and welcoming more than 150 young Bahraini skaters to join them.

Following the opening, the crowd moved to the Crowne Plaza Hotel, where Lebanese-American comedian Nembr Abou Nassar entertained more than 1,000 people, bringing Bahrainis and expats of all ages and backgrounds together in laughter.

The second night featured the festival’s showcase event: the embassy’s recognition of National Day, Bahrain’s independence celebration. The event, which drew the largest crowd to the embassy in recent memory, also commemorated the 236th anniversary of U.S. independence. The more than 850 embassy contacts and friends attending heard performances by Bahrain’s Ministry of Interior Band and Arab-American country-western singer Kareem Salama, who was on a State Department tour of the region.

During the rest of the week, events targeted specific audiences. To promote the U.S.-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement, one of only two FTAs in the Gulf region, the American Chamber of Commerce in Bahrain hosted a business symposium with keynote speaker Lionel Johnson, vice president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Embassy officers and local tourism industry officials held a “Discover America” travel and tourism seminar to promote the President’s National Task Force on Travel and Competitiveness. The embassy offered a free screening of the film “Casablanca” at a local movie theater, and an art gallery held the opening of its “American Art Space,” where young and aspiring Bahraini artists can create works using the latest materials and technologies. The Hard Rock Café hosted an American trivia night, while the Intercontinental Regency held a jazz night.

The embassy’s economic and commercial section gained funding for America Week from the sponsorships of American businesses in Bahrain and the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs’ Business Facilitation Incentive Funds program, which underwrites commercial outreach activities at posts without a Foreign Commercial Service presence. Funds from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs supported the visits of arts and sports envoys. Embassy staff and their families volunteered at many of the events, including Bonnie Krajewski, who hosted a celebration of American quilting.

At its end, America Week had drawn more than 6,000 Bahraini citizens and residents to its activities and more than 27,000 people to its website, which had event schedules, specials offered by U.S. brands and interactive activities such as a place to share favorite U.S. vacation memories. Widespread media coverage included interviews with the ambassador on national television and radio, and reports in Bahrain’s seven local dailies and magazines.

America Week let the local community come together in celebration, laughter and partnership after a uniquely challenging year. Embassy Manama hopes to hold another in 2013. ■



Top: Ambassador Krajewski and Bahraini officials view classic American cars at the American Fair, Trade, Car and Motorcycle Show. **Bottom:** Bahraini and American players team up for a friendly basketball tournament at a local sports club.

Photos by Embassy Manama

Embassy Seoul Implements Free Trade Pact

By Yena Hong, intern,
U.S. Embassy Seoul

Thanks to the United States–Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA), sales of U.S. products such as fruits, nuts, wine and cars are all on the rise in Korea. For instance, the elimination of tariffs by the KORUS FTA has helped make U.S. cherries Korea's number one imported fruit. U.S. wine sales have also made a significant splash, and General Motors launched its iconic Chevrolet Corvette in Korea shortly after the agreement took effect.

The U.S. Embassy in Seoul played a crucial role in facilitating and implementing the historic free trade agreement. After formal negotiations began in 2006, the proposed pact received regular Korean news coverage. Although many Koreans generally welcomed the trade partnership, Korean farmers protested against it in order to protect their livelihoods. Embassy Economic Specialist Chung Soon-young regularly reported to Washington on shifting Korean attitudes about the pact, and the embassy economic team closely monitored public demonstrations and sentiment to identify issues that might derail the negotiations, while providing Washington with important advice on managing these issues.

The embassy also promulgated positive messages about the agreement to Korean groups, taking advantage of the mission speaker program; amplifying the message with government, industry and students whenever possible; and meeting with the Korean press corps. Negotiations concluded in 2010, and the deal was ratified in late 2011 and took effect in March 2012.

“[The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative] and the embassy worked closely and seamlessly throughout the negotiations and now the implementation phase of KORUS,” said Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Japan, Korea and APEC Affairs Wendy Cutler, chief U.S. negotiator for the agreement. “It’s really been a model of cooperation that serves the U.S. national interest so very well.”

The embassy is now helping ensure the agreement’s full implementation by highlighting the FTA’s benefits to U.S. and Korean audiences, advocating for a fair and transparent regulatory environment and assisting Korean businesses interested in investing in the United States. Economic Officer Lu Zhou developed a blog for the economic section to promote the embassy’s involvement and publicize KORUS successes.

“We’ve seen a lot of interest among both English- and Korean-speaking audiences,” said Zhou. “The embassy’s SMS outreach has also generated more awareness and a lot of ‘likes.’”

The embassy also works with the U.S. business community to ensure the pact’s benefits are fully explored. In May, U.S. Ambassador to the

Republic of Korea Sung Kim delivered the keynote address at a major KORUS FTA conference co-sponsored by the American Chamber of Commerce in Korea and Korea’s Ministry of Finance. During the event, Economic Minister-Counselor Michael Kleine moderated a session on financial services, while consular and commercial officers staffed information booths to answer KORUS FTA questions from more than 400 participants, including many potential investors.

The embassy regularly provides interested American companies with information on entering the Korean market and maximizing the agreement’s benefits. Ambassador Kim said the embassy encourages “not only big companies but also small and medium-sized enterprises to explore and exploit the opportunities presented by the free trade agreement.”

According to the U.S. International Trade Commission, the deal will increase U.S. exports by about \$11 billion annually and create tens of thousands of American jobs. Early signs are positive: The United States and Korea have seen growth in KORUS-related trade, and interest in the Korean market has surged among American companies.

“We welcome a steady stream of companies, politicians and trade missions interested in Korea,” said Deputy Economic Counselor Dan Jassem. “We share their interest and enthusiasm.” Almost 80 percent of U.S. exports to Korea became duty-free in March, and tariffs will phase out on 95 percent of products within five years. Additionally, the agreement opens access to Korea’s \$580 billion services sector.



Cherries from the United States, as well as such other American goods as wines and cars, have become less costly in Korea, thanks to the KORUS Free Trade Agreement.
Embassy photo

“Both American and Korean consumers benefit from greater variety and lower prices,” Jassem said. “It is easy to see how the KORUS FTA is the most significant bilateral free trade agreement for the United States in decades, the largest since NAFTA.”

According to Ambassador Kim, the agreement goes beyond trade numbers to establish a new milestone for U.S. foreign policy in Asia. “[KORUS] demonstrates our commitment to a very important bilateral relationship in the world’s most dynamic region,” he said. The KORUS FTA will likely serve as a model for other agreements within the region, and represents a deepening of the U.S. relationship with the Republic of Korea beyond already robust political and military ties. ■

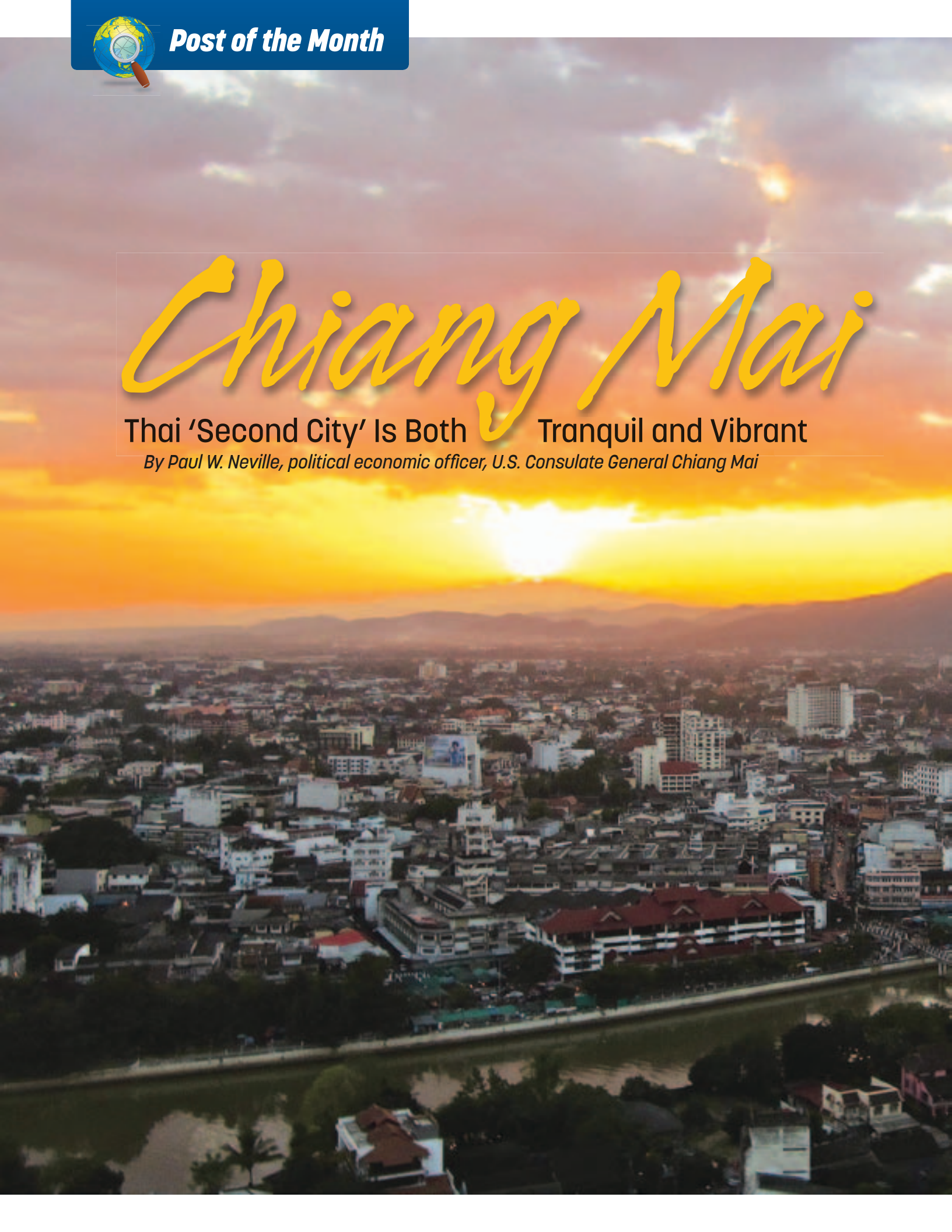


Post of the Month

Chiang Mai

Thai 'Second City' Is Both Tranquil and Vibrant

By Paul W. Neville, political economic officer, U.S. Consulate General Chiang Mai





The setting sun casts a golden glow over Chiang Mai as it dips behind the hills surrounding the city.

Photo by Paul Neville



Chiang Mai provides the perfect balance to Thailand's sun-kissed beaches and megalopolis capital, Bangkok. It stands out as an oasis of ancient tranquility amid the lush hills of Thailand's upcountry.

Tourists know Chiang Mai for its delectable cuisine, peaceful temples, jubilant festivals, elephant camps and adventure activities, but those things are only part of the story. Beneath the layer known to outsiders lies a serene city proud of its cultural heritage and filled with kindhearted, freedom-loving people.

There is a sense of discovery around every corner. Chiang Mai is a relatively small city—only one-tenth the size of Bangkok—yet expats who've lived here for years and even locals say they haven't unlocked all the mysteries a hodgepodge of cultures and hundreds of years have created. While visitors catch a glimpse of Chiang Mai's charm, the locals' attitude is one reason the city is a gem. The slogan "land of smiles" is not just a tourism campaign catchphrase; it truly reflects the mood of the people.

Balancing Modernity, Tradition

Like every city with ancient roots, Chiang Mai seeks to strike a balance between moving forward and preserving tradition. The city is tightening its grip on modernity with sparkling new shopping malls and a burgeoning technology sector, but it is also struggling with heavier traffic and overburdened utilities and infrastructure. Despite its potential as one of the best cities for walking in Asia, bustling vendors obstruct sidewalks and chaotic power lines inhibit the views of breathtaking traditional architecture.

Chiang Mai is considered the "Second City" of Thailand and the business and cultural capital of the North. Thailand's Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra and her brother, former Prime Minister Thaksin

Shinawatra, have a family history in the city dating back more than 100 years. Though the central government is paying increased attention to Chiang Mai after last year's general election—including a promise to build a high-speed railway between Chiang Mai and Bangkok—many local residents support decentralization and greater autonomy.

The U.S. Consulate General in Chiang Mai is the sole U.S. consular presence outside Bangkok and covers 15 provinces in northern Thailand. The consulate has 23 American employees and 50 Locally Employed Staff, as well as a number of contract employees.

They are never bored. Consular section employees deal with visa applicants, a growing number of American visitors and more than 7,000 American residents. They work with U.S. groups such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars and regularly provide outreach to Americans and Thai citizens seeking to visit or study in the United States.

The political-economic team monitors trade, counternarcotics, ethnic conflicts, refugees and other cross-border issues. The team follows the exiles from Burma who live in northern Thailand, covers dynamic political issues, promotes the human rights of vulnerable groups such as trafficked persons and supports Thailand's political development toward sustainable democracy.

Connecting with Communities

The consulate's public diplomacy section supports cultural events, such as photo exhibitions and musical performances, and arranges U.S. Strategic Speakers covering topics ranging from freedom of expression





Clockwise from above: Staff members accompany a float in Chiang Mai's Loy Krathong Festival to celebrate the consulate's 60th anniversary in 2010; consulate staffers and family members take a photo break during a rock climbing trip; U.S. Ambassador Kristie Kenney tours the Nong Hoi Royal Development Center, one of Thailand's largest vegetable producers; musicians perform at the American Studies Club jazz night at Chiang Mai University.

Photos by U.S. Consulate General Chiang Mai



to flood mitigation. The section organizes activities to connect with local communities, including mural painting, environmental activities and participation in parades. Chiang Mai University's American Corner regularly hosts English conversation programs and U.S. film screenings.

The consulate is engaged in a number of local and regional initiatives. Coinciding with the mission's Thai-U.S. Creative Partnership, the consulate instigated the Chiang Mai Creative City program in 2010 to promote creativity, innovation and education. This initiative, along with the U.S. National Export Initiative and the post's outreach to locally based U.S. companies, reflects the consulate's effort to cultivate economic development in northern Thailand and thus provide increased opportunities for U.S. exports and investment.

The consulate has also been active in promoting Secretary of State Clinton's Lower Mekong Initiative, an effort to foster integrated sub-regional cooperation and capacity-building. In June, the consulate worked with the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok to organize a two-day Life Sciences Innovation conference that brought together regional representatives to share knowledge in medical and agricultural development.

In addition to the Department of State, the consulate hosts the Drug Enforcement Administration, which supports Thai law officers in counter-ing drug smuggling from the region known as the Golden Triangle. U.S. Air Force Detachment 415 operates from a local Thai Navy installation to monitor global seismic activity and support compliance with the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. About a dozen Peace Corps volunteers work in northern Thailand, primarily in education.

Living the Dream

Though still quintessentially Thailand, Chiang Mai has a distinctly different feel from Bangkok. In addition to having cooler weather, the city is more relaxed and less expensive. An easily accessible international airport takes travelers anywhere in Asia in a matter of hours.

Chiang Mai offers activities found in any American city—from bowling to CrossFit gyms—plus local specialties, including northern Thai cooking courses, meditation camps, vast markets with local handicrafts and Buddhist temple tours. Outside the city, thrill-seekers can get their fix from zip-line courses, whitewater river rafting, bungee jumping and multi-day jungle treks to remote hill tribe villages. A world-class zoo, a night safari and elephant camps are particular family favorites.

Eight local universities give the city a youthful vibrancy. There is a fun nightlife and plenty of coffee shops. Five million annual visitors and a growing community of retired expatriates have drawn an increasing variety of excellent international cuisine and such amenities as organic grocery stores and good health care.

Historic Ties

With a history dating back more than 700 years, Chiang Mai is one of the most historic cities in Thailand. Long before becoming part of Thailand, Chiang Mai was the capital of the Kingdom of Lanna. Some temples date to the early 14th century and still play an important role in contemporary Buddhism. In the 16th century, Burmese forces invaded and ruled Chiang Mai for 200 years until King Taksin (Rama I) drove them out in 1774. Chiang Mai officially became a province of Thailand in 1932.

The first American to make prominent contributions to Chiang Mai was Reverend Daniel McGilvary, who arrived in 1867 and introduced modern medicines, education and printing. Since then, countless teachers, students, humanitarian workers, businesspeople and U.S. government representatives have strengthened the U.S.-northern Thai relationship.

Since 1950, the consulate has occupied the former Chedi Ngarm Palace, the royal residence of the last prince of northern Thailand. A series of low-rise classic teak buildings, the consulate general facility is one of a quickly diminishing number of historic properties serving as U.S. diplomatic posts. ■



Above: Political Economic Officer Paul Neville visits with children at Ban King Kaew orphanage. Photo by U.S. Consulate General Chiang Mai



Right: Buddhist monks cross a street. Photo by Mark Stevenson
Below: A "flash mob" at Chiang Mai's Sunday Walking Street raises awareness of World Intellectual Property Day. Photo by Pariwat Khaopong





Post of the Month



At a Glance

Thailand

Capital: Bangkok

Government type: Constitutional monarchy

Area: 513,120 sq. km.

Comparative area: More than twice the size of Wyoming

Population: 67 million

Language: Thai, English, ethnic and regional dialects

Religions: Buddhist (official), Muslim and Christian

GDP—per capita: \$9,500

Export partners: China, Japan and U.S.

Import partners: Japan, China and UAE

Currency: Thai baht (THB)

Internet country code: .th

Source: Country Background Notes

Fostering Diversity

Pickering, Rangel Fellowships Celebrate Milestones

By Daniel Stewart, branch chief, Office of Student Programs, Office of Recruitment, Examination and Employment

This year, the Department celebrates the 10th and 20th anniversaries of two premiere recruitment programs that have significantly advanced Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's goal for a more diverse workforce. Since 1992 and 2002, respectively, the Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship and the Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Fellowship programs have identified a stream of talented men and women for the Foreign Service. Created to help the Department increase the number of minority Foreign Service officers, both programs identify and develop a cadre of successful FSOs from all racial and ethnic backgrounds.

The Pickering Fellowship began with the support of former Director General and Ambassador to South Africa Edward Perkins. He and others saw a need for a program to ensure that the Foreign Service reflected the composition of American society. In 2001, the fellowship was named to honor one of the most distinguished American diplomats of the latter half of the 20th century, Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering.

The Rangel International Affairs Fellowship is named for long-time New York Congressman Charles B. Rangel, who secured federal funds for the program and championed the cause of greater diversity in foreign affairs careers.

Both men support the objectives underlying the fellowships, and regularly participate in events to promote the programs and the professional development of the fellows.

The Pickering and the Rangel programs are funded by the Department and administered as cooperative agreements, overseen and implemented by the Bureau of Human Resources' Office of Recruitment, Examination and Employment (HR/REE). Fellows are selected by an independent review panel in a rigorous and competitive process that tests candidates' writing skills, substantive knowledge, knowledge of the Foreign Service and interviewing skills. The selection panels are comprised of former FSOs, academics and administrators, and seek candidates who demonstrate the potential to succeed in the Foreign Service.

The Pickering program, administered by the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, selects 20 undergraduates and 20 college graduates annually, while the Rangel Program, administered by Howard University, selects 20 graduate fellows each year. Fellows enter the Foreign Service upon completing their academic program.

The Pickering and the Rangel programs provide selectees with financial assistance toward the completion of a two-year master's degree, plus two internship opportunities (one domestic and one foreign), and professional development and mentoring support. Fellows must meet all Foreign Service entry requirements and, upon completion of their academic program, must serve three years in the Foreign Service as part of their contractual agreement.

Over the past 20 years nearly 580 Pickering Fellows and 150 Rangel Fellows have contributed to the Department's mission and served with distinction across the globe. Most enter the program with prior overseas experience, such as foreign study, the Peace Corps, Fulbright scholarships and military service. Many have had prior work experience in the private, public and nonprofit sectors, and have extensive knowledge of foreign languages, including Chinese, Arabic, Korean, French, Spanish, Vietnamese and Japanese. Their experience and skills enrich the Department.

In 2010, the programs' alumni formed the Pickering and Rangel Alumni Association to create opportunities for alumni worldwide to connect, network and engage in professional development and community service. (More information is at prfa_officers@googlegroups.com.)

The programs' fellows are an impressive, high-achieving group. One, Dereck Hogan, entered the Pickering program in 1993 and is now director for Nordic and Baltic Affairs in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. He will be the first fellow to serve as deputy chief of mission when he takes on that role at the U.S. Embassy in Baku next year. Hogan's experience as a fellow and the opportunities he received, he said, provided him with a solid foundation for his Foreign Service success. He especially credits the mentoring and supervision of his first DCM, during his 1995 internship at Embassy Manama.



One recent fellow is Jamaica and Bahamas Desk Officer Emilia Adams.
Photo by Christopher Williams




Heera Kaur Kamboj began the Pickering program as an undergraduate fellow in 2003 and entered the Foreign Service in 2007. A member of the American Sikh community, Kamboj said she is proud to have chosen a career in international public service. She has been vice consul in Mexico City and political officer at Embassy Kabul, and is training for her next assignment as information officer in Chennai, India.

The Pickering Fellowship “provided extensive background on the Foreign Service and allowed my family and others to see that working in government could be a real and fulfilling career,” Kamboj said. “It continues to influence my career in many ways. I always think about how I can help out newer officers or motivate others to join the Foreign Service.”

Emilia Adams began the Rangel program in 2004 and entered the Foreign Service in 2006. Now on the Jamaica and The Bahamas Desk—she has also served in Mexico and South Africa—she will soon be off to serve as cultural affairs officer in Lahore, Pakistan. While in South Africa, Adams was a site officer for the 2011 visit of First Lady Michelle Obama. She said the fellowship prepared her well for a career that excites her because it lets her engage with people internationally and promote U.S. policy.

Greg Pardo, a 2008 Rangel Fellow who entered the Foreign Service in 2010, said the program prepared him for the Foreign Service through internships in the U.S. Congress and at the U.S. Embassy in Rangoon. He added that contacts and knowledge developed during his congressional internship were put to good use during his assignment on the Cuba Desk, where he worked closely with Congress to help coordinate democracy programs in Cuba.

“Mentoring is what the Rangel Fellowship does best,” he said, noting that the program “... ensures that all fellows are mentored and prepared with excellent leadership skills for their careers.” He will next serve as vice consul in New Delhi.

More information on the Pickering and Rangel Programs is at www.woodrow.org and www.rangelprogram.org. 

Chelsia Hetrick, EPPD/DPD, and Angela Girard, U.S. Embassy in Paris, contributed to this article.

From top, the 2012 Charles B. Rangel fellows gather in a Main State courtyard and, gathered outside a Department annex, are the 2012 Thomas R. Pickering graduate fellows and 2012 Thomas R. Pickering undergraduate fellows.
Department of State photos

Unique People in Unique Professions

What do an expert in multiple and obscure languages, a survivor who addressed a local health problem with personal expertise and a Foreign Service officer following in the footsteps of his son have in common? They are all Department of State employees with unique career backgrounds.

Like Son, Like Father

In April 2009, David Wessel looked on as his son Geoffrey was sworn in as a new Foreign Service officer. He was proud, and “a tad envious,” he recalls. The son of a career Air Force officer, David respected “those who commit to a life of service.”

By the time of the swearing-in, David was himself thinking of a Foreign Service career. He decided to apply for a management officer position, and Geoffrey began advising him.



David Wessel joins his son Geoffrey, right, on the FSI campus.
Photo by Bongsu Jang Wessel

Geoffrey said it was fun “to speculate about what life might be like if Dad got an offer. I can hardly express how awesome it felt when he told me that he’d received his offer letter.”

Now, David Wessel is about to get his first assignment, and his son is off to his second post, the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia.

The “American story,” Geoffrey observed, “is not just about choosing a career and finding success in that field; you get to reinvent yourself. This story illustrates the openness of the American working culture where a father can follow in his son’s footsteps.”

“Who knows,” he added, “maybe one day we’ll be posted to the same location.”

Employee Is Auctioneer in Four Languages

With two official languages (Tetun and Portuguese) and two working languages (Bahasa Indonesian and English) Timor-Leste presents unique linguistic challenges to the staff of the U.S. Embassy in Dili. One Department employee who meets the challenges is Domingos Da Silveira, a non-expendable-property clerk in the embassy management section, who uses his talent as an auctioneer in four languages at embassy auctions, moving fluently among the languages of all bidders.

Ambassador Judith R. Fergin said, “Domingos is a force of nature, always making things happen faster, better and, as we’ve learned from our auctions, irresistibly.”

Da Silveira grew up speaking Makasai and Mediki, the tongues of his home district of Viqueque, and studied Portuguese at school. He learned Tetun-Dili when he moved to the capital as a young man. He started studying Indonesian in 1976, and learned English after the referendum on Timorese independence in 1999.

Da Silveira, who joined the embassy in 2006, recently won an Extra Mile Award for employing his skills in support of mission goals. In the past six months, embassy auctions have brought in more than \$100,000.

Lab Tech Makes Restaurant Food Safer

In the wake of an Iftar dinner last year, the medical unit of the U.S. Embassy in Dhaka, Bangladesh, saw a surge in walk-ins with gastrointestinal complaints, all traceable to the feast’s traditional spicy beef soup. The soup had been boiled for several hours but was displayed for hours at room temperature before being served.

Thus, Embassy Dhaka medical laboratory technologist Sujit Dey saw a need to raise awareness about safe food-handling practices. He trained the staff at several local restaurants popular with the embassy community. This year, he offered the training again to 15 favorite restaurants—from fast food to upscale—nominated by embassy staff. He gave the three-hour course in the Bangla language. Participants had to agree to pass on the training to their co-workers.

Dey also offers courses on safe food handling to the household staff of mission personnel and others, and does inspections for hygiene and sanitation. He stresses hand-washing practices, since Bangladeshis traditionally eat with their hands, and discusses food allergies, preservatives and pesticide residue. ■

X-Ray Vision of Safety

Backscatter Scanners Bring Safety, Not Danger

By Terry Carraway, Certified Industrial Hygienist and Certified Safety Professional,
Office of Safety, Health and Environmental Management

“Stand still, with your hands above your head.” A new dance? Trouble with the law? No, the posture is just a new part of 21st Century air travel if you have been selected for security scanning using advanced imaging technology. There are two systems in use: backscatter and millimeter wave. The backscatter units look like two large boxes that you walk between and then face with your hands above your head. Some people are concerned about exposure to the X-rays that such machines use to find metallic and non-metallic objects in or under clothing. (The millimeter wave is based on radio frequencies, like radio broadcasts or microwaves, which was covered in a previous *State Magazine* article.) This article discusses five of the most common safety and health myths regarding backscatter machines and some truths about them.

Myth 1: Being scanned by a backscatter unit is like getting a medical X-ray.

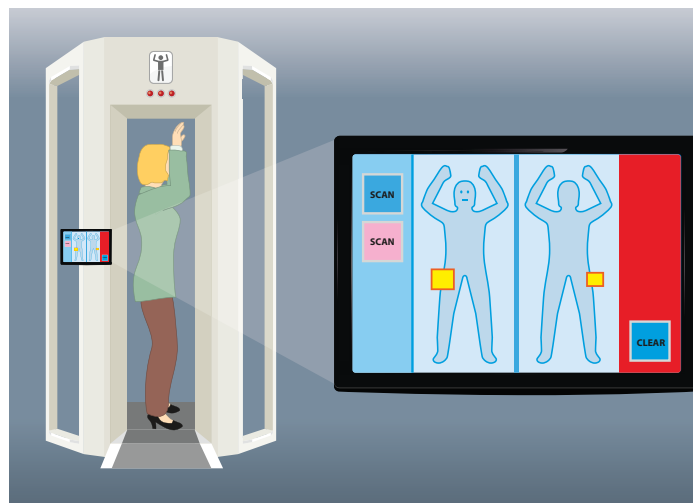
Truth: Backscatter units use very low power X-rays that bounce off skin and objects like Nerf-balls. This differs from the much more powerful medical X-rays, which penetrate the body and form an image on film. Backscatter scanners have a maximum radiation dose of 0.09 micro Sieverts (μSv). The average dose from a chest X-ray is 0.1 milli Sieverts (mSv), and the dose from a CT scan ranges from 5 to 13 mSv , depending on how much of the body is scanned. In other words, it takes more than 1,000 screenings by a backscatter unit to approximate the X-ray exposure a person receives from a basic chest X-ray.

Myth 2: I will be exposed to a lot of radiation.

Truth: The National Council of Radiation Protection and Measurements has set a recommended maximum dose from screening systems of 0.25 milli Sieverts (mSv) per year. The backscatter scanners have a maximum dose of less than 1/2500th of that limit (less than 0.1 μSv). A person would have to be screened more than five times per day, every day of the year, to approach this limit, which is impossible for even the most frequent flyer. The amount of exposure from a single scan is less than the normal exposure every person receives each hour from natural everyday sources, such as the naturally occurring isotopes in all materials or from cosmic radiation. In the United States, the annual average radiation exposure from natural sources is 2.95 mSv —25,000 times the amount received from a single backscatter scan.

Myth 3: Nobody tests the devices to make sure they operate properly.

Truth: The units are tested by the manufacturer prior to shipment, and they are tested by the U.S. Army Public Health Command and the manufacturer when installed. They are also tested annually to ensure proper, safe operation for the traveling public and employees who work near them. Additionally, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) retested all the scanners in 2011 to ensure that they were operating properly, due to concerns voiced in the media.



Myth 4: Only TSA tested the devices.

Truth: The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates manufacturers to ensure the safety of full-body X-ray scanning devices, which includes backscatter scanners. During the development and testing of backscatter scanners, they were evaluated by Department of Energy's Sandia National Laboratory, the FDA, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory and the U.S. Army Public Health Command. The devices are also in the process of receiving European Union (EU) approval, based on testing and examination by the EC Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks.

Myth 5: The radiation exposure will increase my risk of cancer.

Truth: While there may be some risk for any exposure to radiation, the increased risk to passengers, based on the worst-case estimate is very low. According to studies, the excess cancer cases resulting from these screenings are estimated at less than one extra cancer per 8,000,000 passenger screenings. More conservative estimates place the risk at less than one extra cancer per 100,000,000 passenger screenings. An EC Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks report states, "If such risks exist, they are orders of magnitude below the baseline (spontaneous) cancer risk due to other factors."

The scanners used today are well-designed, well-tested devices that provide a minimal exposure to radiation. They have become an integral part of air travel worldwide. The information above should help to address public concerns. Additional information is online at TSA.gov. ■



Diplomats Dance in La Paz

In June, staff from the U.S. Embassy in La Paz for the first time danced in Bolivia's biggest parade, which is also a street party and dance competition. In the "Gran Poder" parade/party, the staffers danced side by side with the winners of last year's competition, the Fraternidad Señorial Illimani.

More than 60 other groups, totaling almost 30,000 dancers, participated in Gran Poder's 20 hours of festivities. The parade is so long and popular that some participants complete it, change costumes and run back to dance with another group. Others practice for four to six months to prepare.

The parade's costumes are elaborate and handmade. Women wear bowler hats and men dress as slave miners, carrying an instrument that makes the sounds of a slave's chains. The dancers follow a six-mile route and are watched by half a million people, on the streets or via television. The parade dates to 1939 and is associated with a La Paz painting depicting the Holy Trinity to which many Bolivians pray, hoping to have their wishes granted.

Tri-Mission Rome Staff Run in Komen Race

On May 20, staff from Tri-Mission Rome participated in Italy's annual Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, which garnered more than 53,000 participants. The Tri-Mission community, which raised \$7,750, has participated for the past nine years. Ambassador to the Holy See Miguel Díaz represented the Tri-Mission at the event, where more than 300 Tri-Mission staff, family and friends participated, the largest registered diplomatic group involved. The community liaison office at the U.S. Embassy in Rome hosted a barbecue for participants after the race.



Video Encourages International Tourism

Last year, more than 62 million foreign travelers visited the United States, spurring the creation of American jobs. But, while visitors from Canada and 36 other countries can travel to the United States without visas, prospective visitors from other countries must seek visas at a U.S. embassy or consulate.

To counter persistent beliefs in some countries that our visa process is too hard to navigate, the bureaus of Consular Affairs (CA) and International Information Programs released the video "Visit America: It's Easier Than You Think" in June in conjunction with Global Economic Statecraft Day.

The video promotes the United States as a destination by combining the imagery of the nation's wonders, vibrant cities and diverse people with a narrative describing the steps to apply for a visa.

"The timing of the video couldn't be better," said Stuart Hatcher, director of CA's Office of Policy Coordination and Public Affairs. "The video will help our embassies and consulates highlight the Department's commitment to place economics at the center of U.S. foreign policy, as well as support the President's Executive Order on Travel and Tourism."

The video is being translated into several foreign languages, and U.S. posts are encouraged to link the video to their travel blogs, Facebook timelines and Twitter feeds. For more information or to view "Visit America: It's Easier Than You Think," visit the visa page of travel.state.gov.



U.S. History Exhibit Opens in Honduras

In July, Matthias Mitman, deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Tegucigalpa, opened a month-long exhibit on U.S. history and culture at the city's Chiminike Children's Museum. Approximately 100 children from the city's Los Estados Unidos de America public school helped Mitman open the exhibit, which the post expects to reach as many as 4,000 low-income children in the city's public schools.

It consists of two rooms of exhibits, interactive games, puzzles, and arts and crafts. Visitors will be able to dress in costumes of historic figures such as pilgrims, cowboys or colonial-era ladies, or have their photo taken as the Statue of Liberty or with a life-size figure of President Barack Obama.

Thanks to embassy funding, the museum will be able to provide economically disadvantaged children with transportation, free admission to the entire museum, a hygiene kit, a snack and a commemorative "passport" with their picture inside. The museum has eight galleries on such topics as Mayan history, the environment, space exploration and the human body.

The exhibit features a wall-size U.S. history timeline, a history of the American flag and the history and symbolism of U.S. coins. Interactive

games include matching U.S. scientists to their inventions, a large map with windows showing the primary economic product of each state and an electronic game board that lights up when the founding fathers are correctly matched to their accomplishments.

The exhibit's most popular feature is the story corner containing more than 250 Spanish-language books for children of all ages, including biographies of famous Americans.

A student from the Los Estados Unidos de America public school models a pilgrim costume and displays her craft projects at the opening of the exhibit at the children's museum in Tegucigalpa. Photo by Javier Ramirez



Retirements

Foreign Service

Attkisson, Patricia O.
Berry, John F.
Beyrle, John Ross
Blue, Cecilia
Brown, Norma E.
Constantopoulos, Alexander
Durkin, Kenneth M.
Fitzgerald, William E.
Galanos Jr., Leon G.
Geake, June E.
George, Atim Eneida
Gregg, Cynthia F.
Groening, Eva J.
Haag, Michael J.

Hooker, Dean Anthony
Hooker, Robyn A.
Jeffrey, James Franklin
Kraus, Martin Fortune
LaRoche Jr., Richard W.
Lawrence Jr., Ellsworth B.
Manzanares, Joseph Robert
Poehlitz, Michael William
Stafford III, Joseph D.
Ulrich, Dennis A.
Warren, Glenn S.
Webb, Glenn Edward
White, George McDonald

Civil Service

Armstrong, James L.
Baker Jr., George C.
Boudreau, Paul E.
Burnette, Wanda L.
Byrnes, Robert S.
Conlogue, Victor L.
Coursey, Peter E.
Dixon, Mary Jean
Guerra, Maria E.
Guice, April J.
Harley, Constance E.
Hill, Jacqueline D.
Hodgson, Linda K.
Howard, Richard P.
Hughes, Joyce
Jones, Letricia
Leen, Rosemarie S.
Leon, Fernando J.

Lord, Natalia
Kamendrowsky
Mackall, Carolyn E.
Manley, Alberta T.
Manz, Matthias
Miles, Tommie L.
Minor, Clarice Yvonne
Newman, Alfred
Ohar, Roxanne R.
Otto, Sharon A.
Podolsky, Lynette Malkin
Ramish, Timothy E.
Savoie, Marcia Ann
Taylor, Regina
Thian, Anthony A.
Thorn, Mark J.
Tuan, Shu-Hwa
Williams, Paula Backus

Tutoring Effort Wins Awards

In April, Ambassador to Ethiopia Donald Booth visited volunteers who are tutoring underprivileged Ethiopian children and gave awards to the tutors and others involved in the project, which received funds from the Kirby Simon Foundation.

Jasmyn Roecks, daughter of Alan Roecks, a management counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa, earned

the Kirby Simon Foundation grant for the tutoring effort, which helps the children learn to speak and read English more fluently. She has since received the Foreign Service Youth Foundation Award for Community Service for the project.

The 60 youths between ages 6 and 16 who receive tutoring were already in a tennis program aimed at teaching them life skills. Grant funds purchased learning materials; equipped a tutoring room; bought book shelves, tables and chairs; and funded transportation to the site for the tutors. Teachers from the Interna-

tional Community School offered their expertise, and the school provided its student tutors with transportation. The International School's tennis team sold hats with the school's logo and raised enough money to continue the project at its current level for several years.

The embassy provided a tarp to protect the tennis courts from wind, instructional materials and 10 boxes of books for an English-language library that now has books appropriate for each grade level, teacher manuals and reference materials.



Timorese soldiers salute the flag over the Presidential Palace on the first day of President Taur Matan Ruak's tenure.

Photo by Prudencio Cabral

U.S. Helps Nation Celebrate Independence

In May, Timor-Leste celebrated the 10th anniversary of its independence and the inauguration of a new president with festivities attended by members of a U.S. presidential delegation, USAID Assistant Administrator for Asia Nisha Biswal and Ambassador Judith R. Fergin. Also present were heads of state from Australia, Indonesia, Portugal, New Zealand and Tuvalu.

After a reception at the Presidential Palace, the nation's president was inaugurated at a park outside of Dili with fireworks. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton sent a congratulatory message aired during the inauguration. The next day there was a solemn flag-raising and the opening of the Museum of the Timorese Resistance.

More than a dozen U.S. agencies have provided more than \$350 million in assistance to Timor-Leste since 2000. The United States also supports Timor-Leste through contributions to the U.N. peacekeeping mission and international financial institutions, including the Asian Development Bank and World Bank.



Visa Center Hosts Naturalization Ceremony

Amid tears, cheers and flag-waving, the National Visa Center (NVC) and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), hosted a naturalization ceremony for 50 New Hampshire residents, who were sworn in as new U.S. citizens on June 8 in Portsmouth, N.H. Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs Janice Jacobs was the keynote speaker. Among those naturalized were three NVC staff members. Almost 300 people attended.

The National Visa Center Quartet sang the national anthem and the U.S. Coast Guard Sector Northern New England Color Guard from Portland, Maine, posted the colors. In his final act before retiring, Simon Nader, the local USCIS Field Office director, administered the Oath of Allegiance, fighting back tears as he did so.

"It feels great, but it is an emotional time for me," he said.

Assistant Secretary Jacobs welcomed the new citizens, saying, "With each person that comes to the United States we become a stronger nation." She encouraged them to embrace the American way of life and remember the traditions of their native lands.

NVC staff and management spent weeks planning the event. "We make legal immigrants here," said NVC Director Kim Kelly. "We really love what we do. We are able to touch lives."



Caryn Davies, far left, rows with the U.S. women's eight team.

Photo by Allison Frederick

Jefferson Fellow's Daughter Rows in Olympics

Caryn Davies represented the United States at the Summer Olympic Games as the stroke of the women's rowing eight, which has been unbeaten for the past six years and continued their dominance with a gold medal performance in London. She is the daughter of Peter Davies, a Jefferson Science Fellow who is a senior science advisor to the Department specializing in agricultural biotechnology.

Caryn also won a gold medal as the stroke seat in the women's eight at the 2008 Olympic Games, and a silver in the women's eight in the 2004 Olympics. She has won at 10 other World Championship and World Cup events, been the top-ranked U.S. high school female rower, and led her college crew to victory in the NCAA championship. An Ithaca, N.Y., native, the 6'4" rower has an undergraduate degree from Harvard and took a year off from Columbia Law School to train full-time for the Olympics.

Main State Hosts 'American Gems' Program

The Foreign Affairs Recreation Association and State of the Arts Cultural Series in June hosted a program of American Gems for Piano by Steven Alan Honley. A Foreign Service officer from 1985 to 1997, Honley left the Foreign Service to pursue a full-time career encompassing both music and writing, and is now editor of the *Foreign Service Journal*. From 1990 to 1994 he was *State Magazine's* music reviewer and conducted and accompanied the State Department's chorus, then known as the Ambassadors of Song. Honley still sings

and accompanies the chorus, now called the T-Tones, and has given nearly a dozen solo recitals as part of the "State of the Arts" series. Honley ended his concert with a moving performance of his own Improvisation on "America the Beautiful."

—John Bentel

Upcoming Events

September 5..... Annual Talent Show
October 10 Matthew Odell, classical pianist
October 31 T-Tones

Mr. Mayor

Former ambassador brings leadership to small city

By Jim Cason, mayor, Coral Gables, Florida

Little did I imagine as I boarded the plane in Asunción, Paraguay, at the conclusion of my three years as ambassador, that I would end up mayor of one of America's most beautiful small cities. I was headed to a retirement seminar and what I then thought would be a life of leisure in Florida after 38 years with the Department of State.

My wife and I had long considered Coral Gables an ideal retirement community. Located just south of Miami, the city of 47,000 residents is home to the University of Miami, many consulates and trade offices, and some 135 Latin American corporate headquarters. With its tropical foliage, well-kept homes, cultural attractions and the linguistic and ethnic diversity, it's no wonder Coral Gables has been named by *USA Today* and *Rand McNally* as the second most beautiful small town in America.

Coral Gables has a large Hispanic community, including many Cuban-Americans, and I'd spent most of my career in Latin America, including as chief of mission in Havana from 2002 to 2005. Once I moved to south Florida, many Cuban-Americans, who knew of me from my Havana days, began urging me to run for state or county office, citing my name recognition in the Hispanic community. In mid-2009, after post-retirement assignments to Amman and Baghdad as a senior Office of the Inspector General (OIG) inspector, I realized that city voters wanted new mayoral leadership, although the incumbent of 10 years was seeking yet another term. City finances were in poor shape, and a new city manager was trying to rebuild and reorganize.

After spending months delving into city records, talking with the city manager and receiving encouragement from my wife, friends and neighbors, I decided to run for mayor. The odds were against me: I'd been a city resident for only 18 months, and the five City Commission members had served a total of 70 years collectively.

But people wanted change, and I spoke Spanish fluently and had no "baggage." I believed if I could carry a majority of the Hispanic vote, I might win. I found an experienced campaign manager and decided on a grassroots campaign.

With my wife, extended family members and a small circle of Cuban-American friends, I went door-knocking and soon discovered that we were recognized and had a fervent group of supporters. I faced one opponent besides the mayor, an Anglo lawyer with a sizable war chest and municipal experience.

Coming into the home stretch to the April 2011 election, we had visited

8,000 homes, but had been outspent five to one, had no money for paid ads and had failed to win the endorsement of the *Miami Herald*. But I was the only candidate who could speak Spanish, and I used Spanish-language media effectively.

I won with 80 percent of the Hispanic vote and a third of the Anglo vote, garnering 39 percent of the 7,869 votes cast—an unprecedented upset.

Being mayor requires empathy and good listening skills, as citizens bring me their problems for resolution. Having had 19 Foreign Service assignments, I could see options for solutions that others may not have considered. Running the City Commission requires tact and courtesy, compromise and at times firmness, qualities I developed in the Foreign Service.

As the city's public face, I am accessible to all who want to see me. I've promised constituents I'll be a full-time mayor with no outside business interests. As for meeting my campaign promises, so far I've cut taxes, maintained services, invested in neighborhoods and supported pension reform. Meanwhile, the city's depleted reserves are growing, and new businesses have opened here.

This is satisfying but exhausting work. I have attended 454 events over the past year, regularly speaking off the cuff, cutting a lot of ribbons and enduring citizen complaints. The pay is low and the perks nil, but helping residents enjoy their community and maintain their property values is rewarding.

Other retired FSOs may also wish to run for local office, bringing a fresh perspective, linguistic and public speaking skills, flexibility, management experience and the ability to understand others' views. To them I say: Go for it. ■



Mayor Cason presents the city's St. Patrick's Day proclamation to Janice McKay, president of the Coral Gables St. Patrick's Day Committee. City of Coral Gables photo



TALKING POINTS FULLY CLEARED AND SET TO MUSIC BY MYRON BLISTER AND THE STAFF ASSISTANTS

IF ASKED: I CARE FOR YOU...
IF PRESSED: BUT NOT LIKE THAT

BUT OUR ENGAGEMENT'S BEEN
SO ROBUST!

THE PEACEFUL SOUNDS OF DESK OFFICER DELORES

OH, HATE THE MEMO, NOT
THE DRAFTER...

PLAY
FREE
BIRD!

THE GRAMMATICAL CHALLENGES OF THE
GUANOVIAN LANGUAGE STUDENT CHORALE

OOPADOO PADOO PODXL...

NO, NO, NO!
HOW MANY TIMES DO
I HAVE TO SAY IT'S
OOPADOO PADOO PODXL!

THE CONSULAR AFFAIRS CHORUS CROONS
THE "VISA WINDOW BLUES"

COME FOR VISA INTERVIEW IN WINDOW TWO -
NO FAKE DOCUMENTS, THEY MAKE ME BLUE!
DOO-BE-DOO-BE-DOO...

THE HARDSHIP-HITTING BEAT OF
"POST DIFFERENTIAL"

AAAAAEMBASSYICKYSTAN!



Obituaries



Theodore A. Bork, 83, a retired U.S. Information Agency employee, died May 23 of complications from A.L.S. (Lou Gehrig's disease) at his home in Columbia, Md. He served in the Army during the Korean War and worked as an architect before joining USIA in 1974. He helped design American cultural centers and libraries around the world. He retired in 1993 while on assignment in Prague. He enjoyed traveling.



Cynthia Ann Bryant, 70, a retired Foreign Service officer, died June 25 of cancer in Chandler, Ariz. Her postings included Vietnam, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Thailand, India, Lesotho, Namibia, Zambia, Madagascar, Morocco and Jordan. She retired in 2000 with 42 years of service. She volunteered for her church, Meals on Wheels and a group that promoted understanding between the United States and other countries.



Osman Coskun, 68, husband of retired Foreign Service office management specialist Barbara Coskun, died June 10 of endocarditis at his home in Milford, Del. He accompanied his wife to posts in Dar es Salaam, Ankara, Accra, Dushanbe and Phnom Penh. They retired in 2000. He was an avid history buff and enjoyed auctions.



Stanley C. Dean, a retired Foreign Service employee, died May 20 in Stuart, Fla. A native of England, he served in the British Army and, after immigrating, in the U.S. Army in Korea. He worked for the Government Printing Office before joining the Department. After retiring to Florida in 1984, he volunteered in a soup kitchen and with Habitat for Humanity.



Roxann Kay Giles, a Foreign Service Health Practitioner, died April 30 while working at the U.S. Embassy in Asmara, Eritrea. She also served in Kazakhstan and Niger. She reached out to each community where she worked. Her passions were reading, gardening and her children and granddaughter.



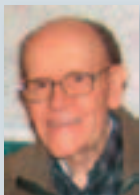
Ronald Alan Cameron Goodison, 90, a retired Department linguist, died June 21 at his home in Winchester, Va. A native of Canada, he served in the Canadian Army and U.S. Army. After working in Saudi Arabia, he joined the Department in 1962 as a linguist and then became associate dean of the language school. After retiring in 1987, he volunteered at the Smithsonian, translating Russian and writing. He was known for his quiet wit and keen mind.



Ann Frances Jablonski, a retired Foreign Service specialist, died April 18 of pneumonia in Wilkes-Barre, Pa. She joined the Department in 1941 and worked as a conference officer for the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO in Moscow, Geneva, Bogotá, Belgrade, New Delhi and several U.S. cities. After retiring in 1973, she volunteered at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.



Frank J. Kozuch, 90, a retired Foreign Service officer, died June 7 at his home in Chicago. He served in the Army during World War II before joining the Department in 1946. His postings included Reykjavik, Bonn, London, Seoul (twice), Bangkok, Lagos, Saigon and Jakarta. He retired in 1986. He enjoyed stamp and coin collecting, was an avid Pittsburgh Pirates fan and traveled extensively with his wife.



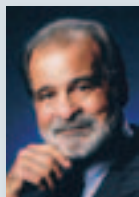
Laurence Gene Pickering, 87, a retired Foreign Service officer, died July 18 in Fort Collins, Colo. He served in the Navy during and after World War II. He joined the Foreign Service in 1954 and served in New Zealand, Thailand, Vietnam and India. In retirement, he conducted extensive research on the diplomatic history of the United States and traveled with his wife.



Sandra J. Salmon, 65, a retired Foreign Service officer, died May 31 in Belize on a dive. She lived in Taos, N.M. She joined the Department in 1973 and retired in 2006 as the consul general in Guadalajara. She also served in South Africa, Hong Kong, Guatemala, Honduras, the Azores, Germany, Cuba, Venezuela and Mexico. She was an avid skier and traveled extensively.



Victor Dante Russillo, 93, a retired Foreign Service officer, died July 1 in Ft. Washington, Md. He served in the Army during World War II and the Korean War, and joined the Department in 1956. An architect/engineer, he constructed staff apartments in Belgrade and an embassy in Mexico City. He later served as an administrative officer in Mexico, Tehran, Lagos, Vientiane and Rome. After retiring in 1979, he remodeled the Milan consulate, designed and built custom homes, and consulted.



Abbott P. Sayre, 80, a retired Foreign Service specialist, died July 10 of colon cancer in Eugene, Ore. He served as a budget and fiscal officer in Turkey, West Africa, Panama and Canada. He retired to Eugene in 1981. He volunteered at a medical center and enjoyed jazz, camping, cross-country skiing and cycling. He was dedicated to living sustainably by using a bicycle as his primary means of transportation.

Stephen McClure Carney, 90, a retired Foreign Service officer, died July 3 in Mt. Pleasant, S.C. He served with the Army in Europe during World War II. His postings included Nicaragua, Ecuador, Martinique, France, Spain, Bolivia and the Dominican Republic. After retiring in 1971, he worked for McGraw Hill. In 1979, he moved from McLean, Va., to Seabrook Island, S.C.

Stanley Harris, a retired Foreign Service officer, died June 10 at his home in Tamarac, Fla. He was an analyst with the Bureau of the Budget before joining the Department in 1956. He served in Cardiff, Wales; Bonn; London; and The Hague. He joined the Foreign Commercial Service when commercial reporting was transferred from the State Department to the Commerce Department. After retiring, he represented the state of Minnesota's commercial interests in London. He was known for his wit and charm.

Michael Bruce Pipkin Sr., 77, a retired Foreign Service officer, died March 31 at his home in Danville, Va. He served in the Army during the Korean War, studied music and library science, and joined the Foreign Service in 1973. His postings included Bangkok, Panama City, New Delhi and Mexico City.

James J. Romano, 82, a retired Foreign Service officer, died June 1 of a stroke at his home in Chattanooga, Tenn. He served with the Marine Corps in the Korean War. He joined the Department initially as a diplomatic courier and traveled extensively in South America. He was posted to Panama, Tokyo, Khartoum, Istanbul, Wellington and Mexico City. He retired in 1983 with more than 30 years of service.

Gerald Richard Solomon, 81, a retired Foreign Service officer, died May 20 of heart complications in Tucson, Ariz. He joined the Foreign Service in 1955 and served in Guatemala City, Lima and Santiago, as well as five U.S. states. He retired in 1983 and moved to Tucson. He was an avid reader.

George A. von Peterffy, 82, a retired deputy assistant secretary, died June 22. He lived in Germany and Connecticut. He served in the Army and worked in academia and business before becoming a DAS during the tenure of Secretary of State William Rogers in the Nixon Administration. He later worked for Kidder Peabody and GTE. He then devoted his time to writing and consulting. He loved Africa and hunting. ■



End State

Seoul

A seemingly endless stream of traffic pours through a bustling intersection on Tehran Boulevard in the heart of Seoul's Gangnam financial district. With a population of more than 10 million, the Republic of Korea's capital is not only the nation's largest metropolis, but also one of the largest cities in the world.



Photo by Trey Ratcliff

PG.
25



Bolivia

A woman in traditional Quechua garb strolls past pigeons at a park in Bolivia's capital city, La Paz. Quechua and Aymara women adopted the bowler hat, known as a bombín in Spanish, after British railway workers introduced the style to Bolivia in the 1920s.

Photo by Jessie Reeder

PG. 36





Saudi Arabia

The afternoon sun radiates off sand dunes just outside Saudi Arabia's capital city, Riyadh. The nation boasts the world's largest sand desert, the Rub' al Khali, or Empty Quarter. Once considered a wasteland, the Empty Quarter was recently found to house a rich variety of unique plants and animals that have adapted to life in one of the world's harshest biomes.

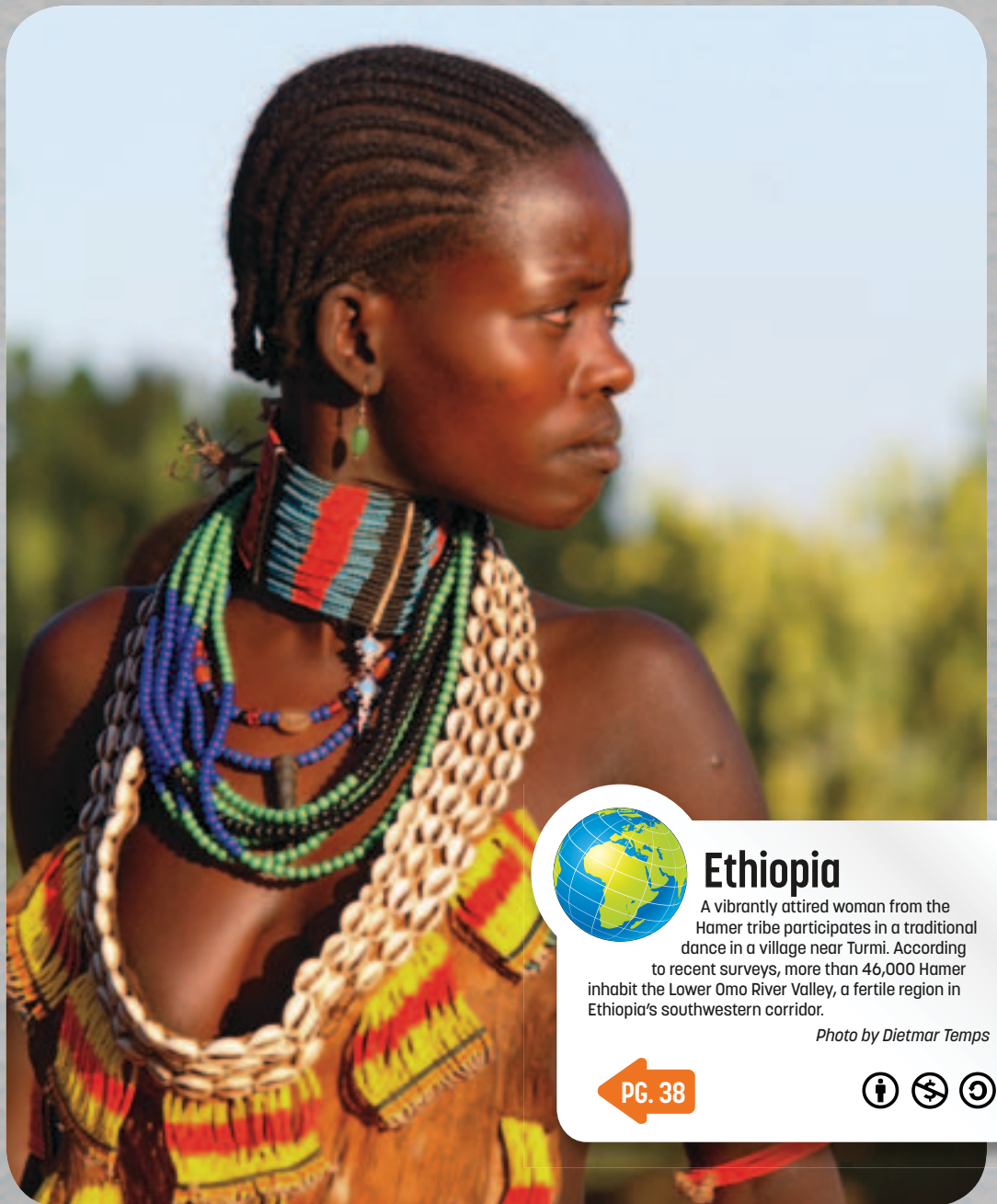
Photo by Arnaud Desbordes



PG. 22



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Ethiopia

A vibrantly attired woman from the Hamar tribe participates in a traditional dance in a village near Turmi. According to recent surveys, more than 46,000 Hamar inhabit the Lower Omo River Valley, a fertile region in Ethiopia's southwestern corridor.

Photo by Dietmar Temps

PG. 38





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